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A Far Away Country...

China has always been regarded as a very strange country. Mourners wear white, meals conclude with soup, dragons are benevolent, the Year of the Snake (in which we are now living) is lucky, and Chinese faces are inscrutable. What can hardly be denied is that Chinese rulers have been and still are averse to explaining their intentions, whether to the outside world or to their own people. Mao Tse-tung maintained the customs inherited from a line of emperors: dignified seclusion, long periods of reflective silence, oracular pronouncements capable of varying interpretations. Hua Huo-Feng seems more likely to change Maoist policies than to jettison these traditions. In 1913 a NEW STATESMAN editorial began: 'The outstanding feature about China this week is the failure of the newspapers to keep us informed' and went on to ask in vain 'what meetings are being held in Peking [and] when the next session of the Parliament is announced to take place.' These complaints might have been echoed during the reign of Mao, when intervals of a decade or more elapsed without a session either of the People's Congress which is the closest equivalent to a Parliament, or of the Communist Party Congress.

A Party Congress has now been held – the first since 1973. But, as on previous occasions, no news of the summoning of the Congress was given in advance, and any account of its proceedings appeared, carefully edited, only after it was over. A new Political Bureau has been elected, or rather accepted, while the former luminaries of that body – vilified as the 'Gang of Four' – are presumably planting rice, though no one knows where.

About the Bureau, a few facts are available. Twelve of its 23 members hold high army rank. The age level of this powerful executive group is high, with Teng Hsiao-ping (76), economic overlord Li Hsien-nien (79) and Defence Minister Yeh Chien-ying (80) well to the fore; nor are any women included. The power structure is a pyramid, with the Bureau elevated above the larger Central Committee, and a Standing Committee of only five men elevated above the Bureau. None of these dubious features can appeal very strongly to an idealistic believer in social democracy.

Only ten years ago, in the heady days of the Cultural Revolution, the youth of China were invited by Mao to 'open fire on the headquarters'. Wall-newspapers spread unauthorised ideas and demands; dissension in the Party was encouraged; workers ejected factory managers, while students did the same to university heads; soldiers were forbidden to check disorder except by persuasion. The 1977 Congress has made it clear that there must be no more of that kind of thing. Significantly, the key speech on the new Party rules was delivered by Marshal Yeh. In terse barrack-room style he laid down that centralism is more important than democracy and that 'it is imperative to strengthen Party discipline'. To this end, 'Commissions for Inspecting Discipline' have been set up. On a wider plane, Chairman Hua announced his object all sublime: 'to bring about great order across the land'. The national goal, to be achieved through hard work and centralised direction, is to bring China up to the level of the advanced industrial nations by the end of the century.

Men like Hua and Teng were doubtless shocked by the adverse consequences of the disruption of the 1960s – the downturn in production, the cessation of systematic planning, the damage to scholarship and scientific research. It is out of fashion to recognise that the Cultural Revolution had its own values – the values of egalitarianism, of popular initiative, of bold and ceaseless questioning of received dogma. These have been the aspects of Chinese Communism which were prized by Mao, and which distinguished it from the sterile and rigid system of the Soviet Union. The post-revolutionary Directory now installed in Peking suggests the prospect of an increasing convergence between the China of Hua and the Russia of Brezhnev. Unhappily, convergence may not exclude continued hostility. This week, the vendetta is probably occupying Chairman Hua's mind more than his obligatory discussions with Mr Vance. Not impossibly, a prophecy may be fulfilled if 1984 sees war between Eurasia and Eastasia.

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Spotlight on Politics

Fred Inglis

Heroes and Leaders

In a marvellous sketch from the later *Beyond the Fringe*, a diminutive, pink-faced Selwyn Lloyd was to be seen trotting after Sir Alec, deferentially calling him 'Leader' – 'Do you think so, Leader?', 'I'll see to it at once, Leader', rather in the spirit of those meta-Oxbridge colleges in which dons call each other 'Master' and 'Senior Tutor'.

The emancipated Social Democrat and Democratic Socialist has grown out of all *that* status worship, of course. When I was speaking to a ward party meeting recently on 'the meaning of socialism' (yes, yes, and why not? No one could say it's a topic to which our prime ministers have given much thought), one of the denim Castros of the post-Houghton comprehensive school staff-room burst out in indignant sanctimony against my notion that the Labour Party remembered the wrong heroes and had only one likely leader left. One sees his point, I suppose. Before you know where you are, if you take that line, you find you're writing letters to the *Daily Telegraph* lamenting the demise of Britain's greatness as registered in a relative absence of Churchills, Mosleys, MacDonalds, – or in a burst of European sentiment, de Gaulles. Look how dewy-eyed people (including our own lost leader) become when Mr Macmillan dodders onto the screen with the hordes of platitudes under his starting orders. Far better grow out of all that leadership stuff, especially when commentators wheel on the heavy adjectives, 'statesmanlike', 'mature', and 'judicious', to help anaesthetise the once irresponsible old dissenters of the past, the Bevins and Bevans, the Kenyattas and Nyereres.

But maybe not. For if you really press Denim Dave, under all that dreadful tarradiddle about Grass Roots Incorporated and making the PLP answerable to the rightful demands and rejections of the people, which leadership is he really prepared to follow? The hilarious answer is a richly implausible bag of TUC all-sorts. Once Jack Jones had disgraced himself by becoming a lackey of the tenants of his own Transport House, and supported policies which would not put *all* his 2 million members out of work, he was dropped from the world democratic XI. And who is left? Well, amid shrieks of laughter, you are given the names of Reg Birch, Mao's nominee for national leader after the glorious revolution, Arthur Scargill, the well-known Yorkshire pudding, assorted mad prophets of the Celtic airways like Mick McGahey and Clive Jenkins, and the honest, charcoal-grey worsted of Alan Fisher, or his gracious silence David Basnett. For the not dishonourable reason that at least a lot of people once voted for them (more than can be said for most of the power elite) the trade union leaders are offered as our best spokesmen of socialist principle.

As Archy the cockroach unforgettably put it: 'I suppose the human race (and trade union leaders with it) is doing the best it can, but hell's bells that's only an explanation, it's not an excuse.' The more or less absolute awfulness of these worthies is no fault of theirs, poor fellows; if *you* gave yourself body and soul for your career to the ghastly tedium, the narrow, grudging, tight-mouthed necessities of the union bureaucracy, in opposition to the cut-glass brayings of their opponents, *your* platform rhetoric would wear a bit threadbare. But hardly a leadership.

At the same time, we are all, even Ronald Butt, perfectly right to be sickened by the absent leadership of the party under both its present and the previous incumbent. Which brings me to the gap between leaders and heroes. It is a banality that there are many holes in the jaws of the front bench, and many carious teeth that cannot spit. Wilson gartered, Jenkins crushing hard currency in Europe, Barbara on a pension; remember when we thought George Brown was a politician? Remember when we had some good lawyers? Remember, ah alas, remember Tony Crosland. For Crosland, in the eyes of many decent Fabians and beaten parliamentary candidates and conscripted ex-parachutists was a believable leader and a proper hero. In a definition, he was heroic because he significantly occupied public space with integrity; he maintained a link with a fading, essential civility; he had convictions, and he could join them to a visible programme. He told us what to do, and it seemed possible.

So when I speak of his being heroic and a leader I don't at all mean he could or should have been prime minister. Nor do I mean to practise the emetic obsequies of a party which only sees what's good for it when it's dead and gone. Crosland stood for a membership – *the* membership I might say, but for charges of idealism – which wanted, trans-classes and systems of production, to ensure food, comfort, shelter, decency, for all who had been chewed up and spat out by the organs of capitalism. He set up his politics on morally decent ground, on the great names of equality, justice, happiness, and he made the names tell both in what he thought and what he did, in books and in life.

Other leaders have done all they can to avoid telling us what they think and to hide as far as possible what they are doing. Shirley Williams is hardly heavy enough to fight Crosland's weight, and Tony Benn, who seems to the ignorant eye to speak as if all men were gifted with rationality is, as the *Daily Mail* will tell you any day, as mad as a hatter. If you are one of the countless people in and out of the Labour Party who really aren't driven by blind greed, don't *really* mind if the pay rise won't run to Ibiza this year, dislike the Frogs making a fortune out of butter they don't want and can't sell, but would like a country in which their kids got a square deal and a chance of delight, if you're such a person you want to know who speaks for you in the great public forums. Who, who takes any such place with dignity and loyalty and honour?

The history which a political party writes names a line of men and women who lived the social and democratic virtues, in public and incorruptibly. Mostly we keep them at a safe distance underground: Keir Hardie, Richard Tawney, Nye Bevan, Bert Wynne. When party historians go to the cupboard in order to dress up a skeleton in new clothes, we should watch out. Revamping Ramsey MacDonald is a present case in point and should be put down with gall and wormwood.

Crisis will make a man of you. Or so the tale goes, when the after-dinner Left, which has nor youth nor age, settles down to pick out the great historical moments. Those moments when all is changed, changed utterly, and a man or a woman is forced to make the choices which really count: Konstadt 1921, Paris 1945, Budapest 1956, Prague 1968.

Such moments come along rarely. Better, by the same token, to have heroes than moments. So, if I name my heroes, you will tell me who I am. Say, Richard Titmuss, Jack Jones, Les Cannon, Tony Crosland, in the second division; Bertrand Russell, Willy Brandt, Nye Bevan, Noam Chomsky, in the superleague. A bit academic? Not so. For each man made what he stood for clear, pure, and intense, in public life: Titmuss for altruism, Jones for justice, Cannon for probity, Crosland for a rare, disinterested intelligence. And the greater men embody greater virtues.

Is it innocent to talk like this? If so, we could do with more such innocence. For if we do not have examples of how to act out such qualities, the qualities cannot survive. Heroes are not always leaders, and we need a few of both. But if you seek them among the living, you won't find men and women in or out of Parliament who will lead the Labour Party to a famous victory in the next two years. The task in hand for the next cadre of true leaders and heroes is to speak to the party's soul, not to save its seat.

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John Griffith

Death of the Political Salesman

The political promise has reached the end of its useful life. As we have known it, the political promise was the product of an association between popular democracy and reformism, both emerging in some strength during the third quarter of the 19th century, by which time the modern regulatory state had been founded. Placed end to end, political promises burgeoned by 1900 into party political programmes summarised in party manifestos, with Tamworth and Midlothian as respectable forerunners.

Thereafter, for more than 60 years, not always believed, often greeted with cynicism, the political promise persisted because politicians were able to give it some credibility. Not usually kept to the letter, it was sufficiently fulfilled by actions close enough to the spirit. This was possible, first because a rich country (until 1914) or a reasonably well-to-do country (until 1939) could afford the cost. Moreover, politicians had the wit not to promise to cure the worst evils, which they believed or pretended to believe were beyond their control – like unemployment in the 1930s.

Secondly, reformism had much room to work in. There was great scope for improvement in every aspect of urban industrial life, without the changes threatening – indeed they often strengthened – the strong citadels of political and economic power. Improved public health, some slum clearance, state insurance schemes, some income redistribution, the nationalisation of basic energy industries and the railways, even a health service and an improved educational system, all could be accommodated.

But that was yesterday. Now the political promise has lost its efficacy. This can easily but superficially be attributed to the state of the economy Keynes's macro-managers are not in a position to deliver the goodies because the micro-managers are not producing the wealth from which those goodies must come. Perhaps, also, the macro-managers, as politicians and public servants, no longer seek quite so consciously as in the past to serve the public interest. One has the impression that government is now become another sectional interest and that pluralism has reduced government to the level of a self-seeking group with its own aims and ambitions, its own internal loyalties, its own looking after its own interests first. To an increasing extent, regard is had to the interests of the bureaucracy, to its preservation, to its protection. The minister and the public servant seem more and more to resemble the corporation man in the American tradition.

Yet the state of the economy is only a part of the matter. More importantly, gradualism has ceased to be inevitable. Incrementalism must have a stop. The scope for reform has been wide but also shallow and it is now apparent that the hard rock has been reached. Further reforms of any significance must begin to threaten the political and economic system itself. The Fabian party is over.

Examples abound. Does anyone believe that a wealth tax, or the nationalisation of the insurance companies and the banks, or the introduction of industrial democracy are merely next steps along the road of gradual reformism? Or that the abolition of pay-beds or of independent schools or of the House of Lords is a matter merely of collecting a sufficient number of votes in Parliament? Or that the problems of urban decay and urban slums and homelessness can be solved by legislation? The reaction to the Bullock Report shows how sensitive are the protectors of the status quo to even the most modest of proposals if they affect the working of the social order, however slightly.

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On the contrary, we have now reached the point when even apparently small changes touch and are seen to touch the rock on which the whole system stands. A proposal, for instance, to change the system of appointing the senior judiciary and to recruit judges from persons trained to be so and not only from senior barristers would be totally resisted, and not only by the legal profession. The proposal may look modest but in practice it might radically change the composition and purposes of the group of 100 men whose decisions are sometimes as crucial to the working of our present society as are those of the 100 most senior civil servants. Again, a proposal that the most important public appointments outside the civil service – such as the chairmen and members of public boards of all kinds – should become elective (by whatever constituencies) would be similarly resisted to the utmost. And rightly, if it is wished to preserve the present system.

With this decline almost to vanishing point of the development area of reformism goes another phenomenon also fatal to the political promise. Popular democracy – in the sense of large numbers of people saying what they want and having the means to get it – has been a long time coming. Every schoolboy knows that the alarms felt and heard by the doom-watchers of 1867 and 1884 did not awaken the newly enfranchised to a realisation of their power, largely because that is not the way revolutions come about.

But recently popular democracy has come to mean the exercise of economic, not political, power and governments have been reduced to the role of supplicants begging trade union leaders (of both working-class and middle-class groups) to hold down wage demands, industrialists to invest more, and price-fixers of all kinds to be moderate. The political promise, as *quid pro quo*, if it is made, is known to be empty because the politicians have no longer the means whereby they can deliver. As with price control. So the supplication is unlikely to be listened to.

Indeed, the supplication and its inevitable failure are symptoms of a weakness at the heart of the whole political system. No one has ever believed that governments have limitless power. But it is also untrue that there was a time when governments merely kept the ring within which competing interests struggled for supremacy and by some mysterious alchemy thereby ensured the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Even the most laissez-faire of governments knew they had at least to grease the palm of the hidden hand. But when governments agree that, for different reasons, they can neither control wages nor impose a wealth tax they are admitting their inability to act as macro-managers of the national economy. If such matters of broad principle are truly outside the sphere of effective governmental activity then our political system has changed quite profoundly.

What can be the basis of social obligation in such circumstances? Recently revived and enjoying much popularity in some places is the notion of a just society. Individuals can be expected, according to this, to restrain the exercise of their economic power only if they believe their society as a whole to be just. So the job of governments (and others) is said to be to ensure that this is so. But those individuals and their organisations believe that a just society will not be achieved except by the exercise of that power, because politicians no longer have the means or, perhaps, the will, to achieve it. So the circle closes once again.

For over a hundred years, politicians have provided the lubricant whereby changes in the social and economic order have been eased, with more or with less success, through the political machine, producing reforms in response to sectional demands. Now the political promise has failed to survive the exhaustion of reformism and the demands of popular democracy. If, as a result, the centre does not hold, will chaos come again?

Alexander Cockburn

Murder, the Mayor and Mr Murdoch

On the front page of the *New York Times* last week there was a photograph of some New York policemen, all saluting and all with their mouths open. They were saluting the flag and singing the anthem, and the reason they were lined up and indulging in these activities was that they had all been involved in the arrest of David Berkowitz, charged with being 'Son of Sam', and hence a mass murderer.

You will note that Berkowitz has merely been charged, and, therefore, you may opine that distribution of promotions and medals to the constabulary had been better deferred until Berkowitz is convicted. You would, of course, be right. But then you may not be aware of mitigating circumstances: namely, that a mayoral race is in progress in New York; that a newspaper war is being briskly conducted in which such technical questions as Berkowitz's right to a fair trial carry small weight; and, finally, that the symmetry required by the common belief that Berkowitz was apprehended by our old friend 'painstaking and dogged policework' demands that he definitely be the killer.

It's a moot point whether the 'Son of Sam' case outstrips the terminal drama of the late Gary Gilmore as an exercise in the revoltingly macabre. Connoisseurs may argue that Gilmore's death-cell firing of his literary agent (or 'attorney', as purists would put it) will prevail against all challengers for some time to come. And, indeed, the late Gary Gilmore can count on such writers as Norman Mailer to write him into history. The accused Berkowitz has so far failed to rally such top flight talent. But the antics of lesser fry (namely, the newspaper editors, publishers and journalists working the story) make New York a worthy rival to Utah in the death hysteria stakes.

Starting in July of 1976 and concluding just over a year later the 'Son of Sam' killer is commonly thought to have struck eight times, murdering six people and wounding several others. Last March the police announced that the early killings were the work of one person. The press and hence the public began to realise a homicidal maniac was loose in the city. In April the murderer thoughtfully sharpened his image by adopting the name given him by police detectives – 'Son of Sam', signing a note to the police thus.

In early June he wrote a note, also signed 'Son of Sam', to Jimmy Breslin, prominent columnist on the *Daily News*. Breslin published it, along with an appeal for the killer to give himself up. It seems the police were in favour of this, hoping to get a specimen of 'Son of Sam's' fingerprints superior to the poor fragments they already had. By this time the city was working itself into a fair case of hysteria. It was thought that 'Son of Sam' favoured the borough of Queens for his forays. Late night couples in parked cars breathed easier – erroneously – elsewhere. It was thought that 'Son of Sam' attacked only girls with long brown hair. All over Queens and then Brooklyn girls pinned their hair up. 'Son of Sam's' last presumed victim was a girl with short blonde hair, sitting in a car nowhere near the zone of the previous killings.

Meanwhile the force of detectives – constantly increasing in number as Mayor Beame hurled, amid fanfares of publicity, fresh manpower into the case – continued its dogged work. On the basis of the prose style of his notes they concluded the killer to be a man of good education, possibly an alumnus of a seminary. They thought he fired his Colt 44 through a plastic bag. They thought he staked out the venues for his assaults far in advance and meticulously planned his escape routes. They even thought (for such was among the unpublished list of 12 prime suspects) that he might be a freelance journalist. If the statements of Berkowitz subsequent to his arrest and confession are true, all of these assumptions were wrong. And if Berkowitz is, indeed, the killer the police-sketch of his presumed appearance, compiled from the collection of witnesses, was wrong too.

It was commonly thought that in his letter to Breslin the 'Son of Sam' killer had promised to kill again on the anniversary of his first spree, 29 July. This was wrong. 'Son of Sam' had merely asked Breslin what he planned to write about the anniversary in his column that day. However the papers began to put 'Son of Sam' under considerable deadline pressure, both Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post* and Breslin in the *Daily News* asked whether 'Son of Sam' would strike on the anniversary night. The city was portrayed by television and press as being in a state of panic and apprehension. Nothing happened till the night after the anniversary, when 'Son of Sam' attacked

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a couple near the Verrazzano Bridge, killing Stacy Moskowitz and wounding Robert Violante.

The papers now took the gloves off in earnest, none more ludicrously than the *New York Post*. Now, it could not be said that Rupert Murdoch's acquisition of the *Post* at the end of last year actually launched the city into a new era of sensational crime journalism. The *Daily News* does not, when it comes to the crunch, need many lessons in this particular branch of the profession. But the *Post* has been making a bid, athwart its former readership profile, for blue-collar circulation (hitherto monopolised by the *News*) and saw the 'Son of Sam' case as a fine opportunity to show its mettle and provide the citizenry with proofs of what Australo-British gusto could do with a good story.

Certainly neither paper was idle. Berkowitz's adoption papers, traditionally and legally among the most sacrosanct relics of a citizen's privacy, were published in the *Post*. The *Post* and *News* also published letters he had written to a girl friend years before, generally pacifist and liberal in tone. The two papers paid trifling sums for them, but the *Post* ran the stronger headline 'How I Became a Mass Killer'. A reporter and photographers were arrested breaking into Berkowitz's apartment, which had been sealed by the police. The *Post* headlined one such ghoulish picture 'Inside the Killer's Lair'.

Meanwhile Berkowitz's first attorney was charged with having attempted to sell taped statements by his client to the newspapers for up to $100,000. Scott Meredith, a well known *bona fide* literary agent, has since been approached with other materials with the request that he handle them. One resident of Yonkers, Mr Sam Carr, whose dog Berkowitz is believed to have shot and who, indeed, is thought to be 'Sam', will only speak to the press when in receipt of $15,000.

The commotion over the press handling of the case continues, hand-in-hand with fresh interviews with relatives of the victims, acquaintances of Berkowitz and so on. Even before Berkowitz's arrest the *New Yorker* editorialised: 'By transforming a killer into a celebrity, the press has not merely encouraged but perhaps driven him to strike again – and may have stirred others brooding madly over their grievances to act . . .' This brought the predictable responses – the first amendment, the duty of the press, the right to know and so forth. Nothing much will happen as indeed nothing much happened (beyond the brief incarceration of a reporter) when the *Los Angeles Times* once bought and published the confession of a member of the Manson family.

The trend is clear: killers will go to the chair (passionately desired by many Americans) not repenting their crimes but abusing their agents for not sticking out for a 15 per cent royalty on paperback sales. Still, hysteria does subside in the end. Last month the Governor of Massachusetts announced that pretrial publicity and legal chicanery had produced a grave injustice – to Sacco and Vanzetti.

New York

Mary Holland

After the Ball Was Over

Last week the Independent Broadcasting Authority banned a *This Week* programme on the Queen's visit to Northern Ireland. The programme was entitled 'Ulster – in Friendship and Forgiveness?' and, besides chronicling the events of the week of the visit, it seems to have at least posed the question whether Her Majesty's arrival may not have exacerbated rather than soothed divisions in the community.

The official reason given for banning the programme was the film of a speech made in Belfast by a young member of the Provisional Sinn Fein executive, which the IBA felt could be an incitement to violence. It may be that this was indeed the reason, but in Ireland, North and South, the incident was perceived as just the latest example of the way in which the British media suppress, evade, distort and tell lies about Northern Ireland to suit British government policy.

The *Irish Times*, for example, a paper which is neither anti-British in its attitudes nor inclined to the conspiracy theory of politics, ran an editorial last Monday in which it told its readers that the 'British authorities had gone to considerable pains to conceal fundamental facts' about the political implications of the Queen's trip from the British public. Such suspicions are not confined to the *Irish Times*. Whatever the long-term effects of the Queen's visit may turn out to be, it is clear already that mistrust of the British Government's present motives and policy in the province is now more widespread in Dublin and among the Catholic minority in the North than at any time since the introduction of direct rule.

A few weeks ago one of the most widely respected Catholic politicians in the North told me that the time was fast approaching when the SDLP would have no alternative but 'to plant the flag'. The British Government, he averred, had mistaken the party's willingness to compromise in the past for weakness. The time was coming to remind Westminster that, if it no longer had the will to find a solution to the problems of Ulster, it might find itself confronted instead with the more dangerous and intractable question of Ireland. I confess I only half believed him, but I had reckoned without the Queen's visit. In the event the flag and the reminder to the British Government were both delivered bang on time. The SDLP's decision to boycott the royal festivities was probably inevitable, given the current climate of political suspicion among the Catholics it represents. But it was followed within days by the party's most belligerent statement to date, setting out unequivocally the SDLP's claim to be heard and respected as an Irish party, representing the Nationalist traditions of the Catholic minority. It was probably the most important public shift in political attitudes since the fall of the power-sharing executive in 1974 but, in the welter of self-deluding optimism following the Queen's visit, has been virtually ignored by the British press.

The irony of all this is that ever since direct rule was introduced, the aim of British policy in Northern Ireland has been to try and play down the rival national loyalties which divide the community and build instead on the meagre bonds that unite it. The terms of the deal on offer to both sides, at least until recently, was first spelt out by Willie Whitelaw. If Protestants desired to retain their link with the United Kingdom they must accept a government which included their Catholic fellow-Ulstermen. In return, Catholics must give their allegiance to the new administration and lay aside, at least for the forseeable future until the Protestant majority changed its mind, the traditional loyalty to a United Ireland.

Ever since the first power-sharing executive the SDLP, not without considerable opposition, has hewn to this policy. It was an extraordinary step forward for a party representing an electorate historically and passionately nationalist to make; yet no politician since Whitelaw seems to have appreciated how great a break it meant with history, nor how vulnerable it rendered the SDLP within its own community. For there was always the danger that if the British Government seemed to be reneging on its commitment, or faltering in the task of persuading or bullying the Protestants to fulfil their part of the deal, then the Catholic politicians would come under irresistible pressure to revert to the much more familiar posture – that no justice was possible for the Catholic community within the context of the Northern Irish state.

That is what has been happening this summer. The SDLP's statement in the wake of the Queen's visit is only the most dramatic evidence of it to date. It is given extra importance by the change of government in Dublin and, this week, by the appointment of a new Roman Catholic Primate of All Ireland who is explicitly critical of British government policy and Republican in his sympathies.

In the welter of congratulations following the Queen's visit the SDLP's retreat to nationalism and the pressures leading up to it were ignored by the British media. The *This Week* programme which tried to touch on such thorny and inconvenient issues was banned. One ITN newscaster told the British public he could almost feel the peace in the still air of Belfast. This autumn the British public will look on, uncomprehending and repelled, as events in Ulster explode on their screens. If they comment at all it will be to say how extreme, unreasonable, and psychopathic these Irish are. They will not understand what is going on because they have not been told.

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Jeremy Bugler

The Nuclear Politics of France

'In five years nuclear power will be finished in France,' Brice Lalonde, one of France's best known *ecologistes*, told me in Paris two weeks ago. On the face of it, Lalonde is unhinged: he declaims from the centre of a nation where Giscard d'Estaing practises what called *La politique nucléaire du fait accompli* and meets objections to France's nuclear commitment with a few oracular phrases about the nation's independence and defence. All the time the French nuclear programme unrolls. The aggressive selling of nuclear technology around the world is now in the news, with the contract signed earlier this year to supply two reactors to South Africa. Then there is the massive domestic 'Seventh Plan' entailing 12,000 megawatts of more nuclear energy in 1976-77 and a further 5,000 MW next year, provided by American Westinghouse reactors manufactured in France under licence.

And France, of course, is the only Western nation in the throes of building a commercial fast-breeder reactor, the Super-Phénix *surregénérateur* at Creys-Malville on the banks of the Rhone. Five hundred construction workers and seven gantry cranes are on site, surrounded by a three-metre fence with seven electrified wires and behind that rolls of barbed wire. The Republic's system of centralised decision-making has caused her nuclear programme to accelerate like that of no other nation, unhindered by public inquiries, parliamentary debates or television coverage.

Moreover, Giscard will no doubt be taking satisfaction in the post-Malville psychosis now affecting the anti-nuclear movement. Twelve days ago, demonstrators gathered to protest against a nuclear plant being built above the spectacular white cliffs of Flamanville, near Cherbourg. The proprietor of the *Bar Atomique* in the nearby village of Beaumont pulled down his shutters for fear of the shock-troops from Creys-Malville; locals talked of squadrons of CRS police drawn up ready for action. In the mild event, the Flamanville *manifestation* was pacifically persuasive: speeches from a platform in the centre of a field, ringed by boutiques selling anti-nuclear information. In the evening, there was folk music and dancing. The items in the sky were not helicopters loaded with tear-gas but hydrogen balloons that had tugged free of the grasps of little children to float away and tell the world: *'Je ne mange pas les oranges d'Outspan.'* It was a fête not a fight.

The French Government will no doubt believe its Creys-Malville strategy is fully vindicated. The only thesis that fits the savagery of *les forces d'ordre* there is that it was designed to wind the protest movement so badly that it would never try a militant *manif* again. The Minister of the Interior, M. Christian Bonnet gave his order to M. René Jannin, the préfet of Isère and an old hand at fighting the OAS in Algeria: 'Defend the site at no matter what price.' In an atmosphere of chauvinism (Jannin: 'This is the second time we have been invaded by the Germans') the préfet laid plans to keep demonstrators several kilometres from the site.

Reports in the English press gave the impression of a large band of desperados hurling missiles at a defensive police. Few who were there put the number of violent demonstrators at above 300 (*Le Nouvel Observateur's* reporter estimated 100). The rest were, as *L'Express* attested, people whose equipment for a violent fight with the CRS consisted of sandals and bare feet, rain-soaked T-shirts and empty hands. These people, perhaps 40,000 of them, found themselves faced by an offensive police force, who pursued them for miles. A meeting that evening in a town 15 kilometres away was broken up by tear-gas, rather as if the police after Lewisham beat up people in the heights of Hampstead.

The purpose was clear: France wants nothing like Wyhl on its hands: the German nuclear site that was occupied for months, delaying construction. And if Vital Milachon, 31-year-old pacifist and teacher of physics and chemistry, died from the effect (almost certainly) of a CRS explosive grenade, then Préfet Jannin could say calmly: 'Everything turned out as I said it would' and Minister Bonnet, icily: 'I take full responsibility.'

The ecologist movement in France will take some time to come to terms with Malville, though it serves well those who have long had on their posters *'société nucléaire égale société policière'*. But why is France so deeply committed to nuclear power? Her fuel resources are the empirical basis of the policy: France has limited coal, little gas (and what there is is due to run out in 1983), no oil, and her major hydro-electric sites are already exploited.

But if this potential paucity is the justification advanced by the Government and Electricité de France (the hugely powerful Gallic CEGB), it might *just* under-write fission power programme with the Westinghouse reactors. It does little to clarify why France is pursuing the Super-Phénix and indeed has a site near Tournus for two prodigious 'Hyper-Phénix' reactors of 1,800 MW each. Ostensibly, France embraces the breeder to free it from energy dependence: the breeder will breed its own fuel.

A suppressed National Assembly Commission report rumbled this pretension back in 1974. It found that France's own uranium resources would run out between 1985 and 1990, but that the breeders would not be able to by-pass uranium supplies until the end of the *next* century. France has 100 years of energy-dependence ahead, relying on the uranium in Niger and Southern Africa. The breeder a solution? 'Science fiction' snorted the commission.

France's plunge for the Super-Phénix is more explicable according to energy specialists like Michael Bosquet writing in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, in terms of national ambition. For the Super-Phénix partisans, he writes, it is *the* chance for France to become an industrial power to rank with the super-giants. While all around her are dithering because of scruples, public inquiries and court hearings, France will develop a monopoly of the next century's principal energy system.

Appreciation of this French ambition is behind the frustration of American and British nuclear engineers and scientists. When Dr Walter Marshall, the deputy director of the Atomic Energy Authority and the deposed chief adviser to Benn, warned that Britain would miss out on a huge international market in nuclear technology, he envisaged French fission scooping the pool. Although France has given in to pressure not to sell reprocessing plants, has cancelled a contract for such a plant agreed with South Korea and is apparently trying to cancel a contract with Pakistan, France has no scruples about selling reactors, or about accepting spent fuel for reprocessing. While Britain holds the free-ranging marathon inquiry into the Windscale reprocessing plans, France's plant at La Hague (also near Cherbourg) steadily expands on orders from Paris.

In the face of commercial gains in the nuclear market and Giscard's democracy by *diktat*, what chance has the anti-nuclear movement, or Brice Lalonde's prediction? Lalonde's confidence seems based on a belief that a pro-nuclear stance will be, before long, an albatross around the neck of any political party that takes it. He points to a steady shift in French opinion: 'In a little over five years, we have taken nuclear energy from being regarded as the insurance for future prosperity to being seen as a necessary evil. Five more years . . .'

No one can deny that the nuclear issue is elbowing its way into French politics. The small PSU Left party is the first to have taken an across-the-board anti-nuclear stance (the Liberals might take note of this) and Mitterand's Socialist Party has come out against the Super-Phénix breeder and in favour of a national referendum on nuclear power. Among the unions, the CFDT, which has the greatest number of atomic workers among its members, has taken a surprising stand: it calls for a three year moratorium on further nuclear development until a legal programme on safeguards and public information has been approved. Surprising because unions with members in the nuclear industry are usually uncritical of possible dangers: Britain's conformist trio the AEUW, EETPU and EPEA are examples

But the French Government does have some company inside the wire of the Super-Phénix and the Westinghouse reactor programme: the Parti Communiste and the communist-led union the CGT Georges Marchais, PC Secretary General avers the nuclear programme is necessary for employment and for better living standards for the workers. He either rejects a

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usual or is not aware of US studies that suggest the alternative energies will be better employment-providers than the capital-intensive atomic works.

In Brice Lalonde's eyes, the Communist Party stand has its roots in the way the ideology of French politics has somehow left technology off the map. In the struggle between proletarians and capitalists, technology is assumed to be neutral in itself. It is malevolent in the hands of capitalists, benificent when working for the revolution. (At a recent meeting, one PC member vowed 'the socialist atom will be different from the bourgeois atom'.) France's *ecologistes* and groups like Les Amis de Terre miss not a chance to argue that certain technologies can order society more radically than society can order the technologies.

An opinion poll taken in the immediate aftermath of Creys-Malville supports the notion of a changing mood and suggests that Georges Marchais may come to regret his ready epithet for the ecologists: 'Troglodytes'. The poll found that 76 per cent of Communist voters interviewed were in favour of Mitterand's referendum — an idea violently condemned by Marchais. On other issues in the poll, CP voters were consistently critical of nuclear power. And while the poll found slender majorities for the Government's action at Creys-Malville, it also discovered that nearly one in two people said they were ready to change their way of life and consumption patterns if that meant not building nuclear power stations. In this way, the ecologists may be winning the war of minds.

France's anti-nuclear movements now are hard at work preparing a list of ecologist candidates for the elections to the European Parliament. 'Green' candidates will be on most slates in future French elections, and if they do not themselves win at the polls, they seem likely to make the bigger parties change course. Brice Lalonde's prediction may take more than five years; it may fail altogether. But there's a sound chance that Giscard d'Estaing and the Government may wish they had not pinned their colours so firmly on nuclear energy. Even though the South African bomb may be built using German technology, France's warning to South Africa this week may be a sign that it is learning that selling reactors is not the same as selling cars or machine tools.

Paul Johnson

Are the Scots all Mad?

On the contrary: the great majority are sane. On my many visits to Scotland (I was there again this month) I find that most Scots, right across the social, economic and indeed geographical spectrum, are sceptical about devolution, very cynical about a separate Scots Assembly, and regard complete independence with abhorrence. That does not prevent a small, fanatical minority, propagating nationalism from any platform they can find and looking for a Gadarene herd to stampede; nor, alas, does it stop the political mills of devolution grinding away. The Government's massive defeat on the closure for its original, craven Devolution Bill was a blessed and uncovenanted surcease. But Callaghan and Foot intend to press on with separate Welsh and Scottish home rule Bills not (needless to say) because they care tuppence for the Scots or the Welsh but because they believe Labour has no long-term future in either country without bowing to the Nationalists.

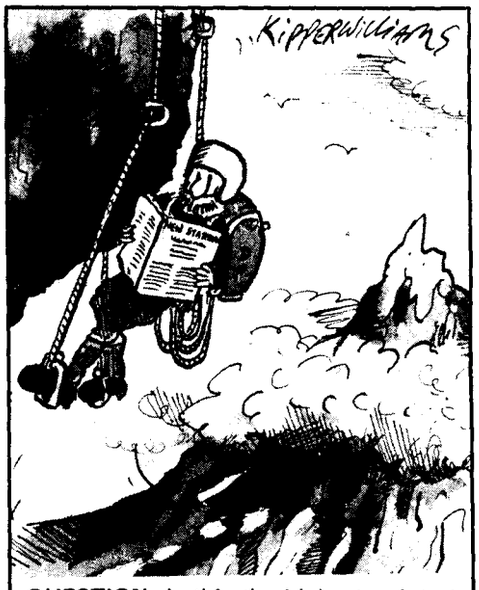
The calculable odds suggest that, this time, the guillotine will be rammed through. There are a number of factors working in favour of a 'Yes' vote: the Lib-Lab alliance (11 Liberals voted 'No' the last time); the Government's wooing of the Ulster Protestants; the re-emergence of a Tory devolution vote, which pronounced 'No' last time in procedural disgust; and, not least, Government efforts, by concessions and bullying, to erode the Labour rebel total of 45 'Noes' and abstentions. Grant Jordan of Aberdeen University, who has done some careful arithmetic, calculates that the Government victory could be as substantial as 325-273 – though it must be remembered that a similar optimism prevailed the last time, at least among ministers, until a few days before the vote. However, the auguries are certainly that, provided the Government survives at all, some kind of Devolution Bill, passed under the guillotine and therefore crammed with anomalies and contradictions, in addition to its inherent weaknesses, will be flung to the Scotnats, rather as one pacifies a tiresome and noisy dog with any old bone that comes to hand.

Poor Scotland! Its politically conscious natives have always been divided between the sensible souls and the romantics. The sensible Scots promoted the Union and made it work; they raised Scotland, with English help, from near barbarism to civility and a modest prosperity; they found their voice in great creative thinkers and doers like Adam Smith and Thomas Telford. The romantics raised the Fifteen and the Forty-five, then whined about their failure. Like the romantic Irish, they prefer a well-nourished grievance to a practical remedy. 'There burns alive' in the romantic Scot, wrote Stevenson in *Weir of Hermiston*, 'a sense of identity with the dead even to the twentieth generation'. So Bannockburn, Flodden and Culloden – like the Boyne and Wexford – have to be fought again, and again and again. What Scotland (like Ireland) needs is a historical *tabula rasa*. What it gets is a state of mind which proclaims, as Hugh MacDiarmid put it:

> Better a'e gowden lyric
> Than a social problem solved

or calls, (as the Nats until recently did) for the restoration of the 'Three Estaites'; or argues seriously, as the Scotnat leader Douglas Young did in the 1960s: 'The great mistake made by James VI in 1603 was to go to London. He should have governed the whole British empire from Scotland.'

It's true the Scotnats have tidied themselves up a bit, ideologically, in recent years. They no longer publicly call for the prohibition of trade union 'intervention in politics' or argue that 'we stand in danger of being supplanted on our own soil by the unselected and uncontrolled influx of population from Ireland'. But they are still both the victims and the propagators of myths. The romantic case can be put in two ways. One is rhetorical (I quote Tom Scott): 'The Scotland of today is no longer Scotland but a philistine travesty of itself. It is Scotshire,



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a county in the north of England, an ex-country, an Esau-land that has sold its birthright for a mess of English pottage.' The second approach is a sub-academic mixture of sociology and history, often manufactured in the US. Thus Michael Hechter, in *Internal Colonialism: the Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (London 1975) compares the Scots to the blacks in the US. He argues that ethnic and cultural divisions in a conquered state like Scotland are not removed in the course of industrialisation because 'the cultural division of labour' is institutionalised; this vicious division, 'imposed by the ruling group', links deprivation not to membership of an oppressed social class but an exploited race. The sloppy approach of this kind of analysis is indicated by the fact that it does not make an 'ethnic distinction' between Lowlanders and Highlanders, both being counted as 'Celts', though for the purposes of the argument in Ireland, the Ulster Protestants are dismissed as 'non-Celts' despite being descended mainly from Scots Lowlanders.

It is to their credit that the Scottish universities, by and large, have set their faces against unhistorical romanticism; indeed, Hechter is driven to rationalise their supposed lack of interest in things Scottish as 'evidence of internal colonialism'. Sensible Scots have the intellectual rigour to reverse the 'colony' argument. Tom Nairn, in an essay on nationalism, points out: 'Scotland is not a colony, a semi-colony, a pseudo-colony, a near-colony, a neo-colony, or any kind of colony of the English. She is a junior but (as these things go) highly successful partner in the general business enterprise of Anglo-Scots imperialism.'

Scottish scholars have done their best to demolish favourite anti-English myths. One is that the primaeval Highland forest was intact when James went South in 1603, and was subsequently demolished by English ironmasters, especially after the 'pacification' which followed the Forty-Five. It was the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* which exposed this one, pointing out that the first reliable Scots survey, in 1750, showed that woodland then covered only 5 per cent of the Highland area. Again, the English or the Union, or both, are blamed for destroying the Highland society and economy in the 18th-19th century. But history shows that the enemy of Highland traditionalism, from the early Stuart days of 'fire and sword' expeditions, to the later industrialisation, was the Lowlander, often aided by individual Highland chieftains.

Even the notorious Highland 'clearances', a prime item in Scotnat propaganda and general romantic waffling, were part of a process going on in all the more advanced countries, as desperate efforts were made to create larger agricultural units and higher productivity to feed the new industrialised millions: Sutherland was 'cleared' so that Glasgow might not starve. The tragedy was that alternative employment schemes on the coast (textiles, fishing) failed – not for want of trying on the part of the 'improvers'. The energetic emigrated, others remained to create the modern Highland problem of lassitude and despair. So far from England or the Union keeping the Highlands back, countless schemes to galvanise the population, financed by government or rich philanthropists, were launched in hope and foundered in recrimination. J. B. Caird and H. A. Moisley ('Leadership and Innovation in the Crofting Communities of the Outer Hebrides', *Sociological Review*, 1961), make the point: 'The lack of local enterprise and initiative in the development of commercial fishing in the Outer Hebrides is quite astonishing. From time immemorial the sea has provided part of the subsistence livelihood of the people; it represented and it still represents a potential natural resource, but the people seemed unable or unwilling to develop it on a substantial scale.' There would be no Highland problem, perhaps no Scottish problem at all, if the Scots seized the paramount role in North Atlantic fishing that geography proffers.

And how is devolution – the romantic 'solution' – going to change these facts of life and history and temperament? The answer is: if anything, for the worse. Devolution will mean yet another, very expensive, tier of government on Scotland's aching back. It will mean more jobs for the boys. Of course there are fanatics who would ban government or quasi-government jobs in Scotland to those unable to speak Gaelic, as is already done to some extent in Ireland and Wales. Home Rule Scotland, let alone independent Scotland, would be a variation on De Valera's Eire: poor, isolated, inward-looking, provincial, intolerant, cranky and, quite possibly, corrupt.

What makes the irrelevance of romantic Scots nationalism so pitiful is that Scotland's problems are huge, hideous – and growing. Writing in the *Scotsman* recently, Neal Ascherson lamented that Scotland breaks all the records for horror. It combines the highest truancy rate in Europe with mass teacher unemployment (from Aberdeen College of Education this year, nearly half the graduates went straight to the dole queue). Strathclyde's urban areas are 'the most socially deprived region in Europe', with average room-occupancy for housing over twice West Germany's. Scotland has the highest murder-rate in West Europe (three times England and Wales), the lowest proportion of second homes, counting caravans, four times as many alcoholics as in England, and more convictions for drunkenness and drunken driving than in all the rest of Britain; in rotten teeth, deaths from heart disease, coronaries and lung cancer, Scotland leads the world. These are largely the consequences of poverty, and they occur despite, not because of, the English connection; England underwrites Scottish welfare, for in all the key sectors (housing, roads, promotion of employment, agriculture, fisheries) expenditure per head is higher, and often very much higher, in Scotland than in the rest of Britain.

While the romantics concentrate on Gaelic and petty assemblies, sensible Scots know that the gap between Scotland and southern Britain must increase if the connection is severed or weakened. In 1953 Sir Alec Cairncross, introducing *The Scottish Economy: a statistical account of Scottish Life*, a book composed of facts, not Scotnat fantasy, pointed out: 'The Scottish economy is an integral part of the British economy . . . [The Border] is not a barrier between two separate economic systems, but a line between two segments of a single economy.' Even with an undivided economy, there are signs that the natural tendency to invest is weaker in Scotland than in other parts of the UK; her industrial performance in recent years is in some ways even worse than Ulster's. The unemployment figures are fearful. In a smallish town like Wick, for instance, there were only two vacancies earlier this month, and 1,016 out of work – a rate of 13.4 per cent. North Sea oil, on which the Scotnats have based all their hopes and their recent political successes, has made no real difference, and seemingly cannot do so. The number of jobs generated by oil, in one way or another, has reached a plateau of (at most) 55,000, and may soon begin to fall. To the dismay of all, there is heavy and rising unemployment in, for instance, the Moray Firth area, which hoped to use oil for a kind of local 'take-off'. In terms of re-launching the Scottish industrial economy, oil is proving to be a new kind of fairy gold; and any ambitious political arrangements based upon its economic impact are a cruel deception of the people.

I think most Scots are fast losing their illusions about the benefits both of oil and nationalism. But devolution is now locked into the mechanistic arithmetic of Westminster politics, especially Labour's frantic efforts to stay in office. So it looks as though the Scots will be given devolution whether they want it or not, so that Scotnat politicos may massage their egos, and Callaghan may continue to lord it in Number Ten. The Scots are not mad: merely defrauded. They ask for bread, and are given a Scone Stone.

Roger Woddis

Gentlemen All

Mr Jack Jones advises shop stewards in a TGWU handbook to be courteous when dealing with management.

Speak gently to your kindly boss,
  Avoiding sudden rages:
It doesn't do to make him cross
  When seeking higher wages.

He may appear to be perverse,
  If not downright unstable,
But you will only make him worse
  By thumping on the table.

Try emulating Mr Jones,
  However it upsets you:
Negotiate in dulcet tones,
  And then see where it gets you.

Present your case with care and skill,
  Bow low when he refuses,
And show you bear him no ill-will,
  Especially if he loses.

He may be suffering from piles,
  His wife may be a warlock;
So win him round with teeth 'n' smiles,
  While tugging at your forelock.

Show him how well you understand,
  Regard him as your neighbour,
And shake him warmly by the hand
  When you withdraw your labour.

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Yvonne Roberts

Is Everybody Happy?

A few minutes outside Bognor Regis, known variously as 'The Last Resort' and 'Bognor-mortis', is a 49-acre site covered with what looks like building-size blocks of melting Neopolitan ice-cream, all pastel pinks and greens. Butlin's has been in residence since 1960, and 'Butlinland is Freedomland' is the message which greets you. The changes wrought by Bobbie Butlin in the past five years are considered a financial success. In 1976, overall profits in the empire crept up to £2.6m. and this year, over a million people – 125,000 of them at Bognor – will take a Butlin's holiday. So 'Is everybody happy?' You bet your life, they're not.

Sonja is a shorthand typist from Kent. She came to Butlin's in May, to be a waitress – and to save money. Yesterday, two-thirds of the way through the season, she 'cracked up' and fled the dining room in tears. 'Everyone does it,' she says smoking a cigarette between sittings, 'It's just a matter of when.'

Sonja begins work at 7.15 a.m. and works through until 7.45 p.m. She gets an hour off in the morning, lunch at 11.30, two hours in the afternoon, one day off a week. She copes with 36 people to a shift, 72 at a mealtime, three times a day. She also washes the cutlery, lays the tables and washes the chairs twice a week. Sonja usually has about 45 minutes to feed three courses and tea to the first sitting, clear and lay up. 'It's not just the pressure,' she says, 'it's dealing with the guests too. I feel really sorry for them because we've got no time to be friendly and no authority to deal with their complaints. I took five salads back out of nine the other day and the supervisor asked me if the campers were happy. I said would you be happy with a foreign body on your plate? But what do I tell the guests?'

Each Friday, the Tannoy asks departing holidaymakers to show their appreciation to their waiter or waitress. The girls say they usually get 50p from a family of four, occasionally it is 10p, rarely does it reach £2. 'I came here to save,' Sonja says, 'but I'll be lucky if I make £20 for five months work. I don't know why I've stuck it out.'

Butlin's at Bognor employs about 1,300 people – maintenance, kitchen-workers, sandwich co-ordinators, security officers, waitresses and the like – to look after its 6,027 guests. All but 300 of the staff live on site on the south side, the guests live on the east and west. A large number, like Sonja, will earn a take home pay of between £19 to £22 a week. They also get a uniform, food and a bed. The food is served in the staff canteen, decorated with a cartoon frieze of banqueting Vikings. The food on the wall looks better than that on the plates. Last year, Butlin's was fined over £1,000 for 46 offences against the Food and Hygiene Regulations. The standard may have improved since then but the memory affects the taste buds. It doesn't help that management sit separately on the left hand side of the dining room with waiter service and cheese biscuits to follow. 'Promotion,' says a cynical kitchen hand, 'is a triangle of Dairylea.'

The staff, in the main, share chalets, two to a room. They are half the size of the guests' chalets, a curtain doubles for a cupboard and if two sleepers get up at the same time, they collide. Butlin's employs an entertainments officer (free films and bingo *et al.*) and a welfare officer but the rules are fairly clearcut. If anyone is ill for longer than 48 hours, he or she is 'terminated', a Butlin's euphemism for sacked. Although, of course, a management man points out, the job is always waiting for them when they come back. 'But where,' Sonja asks, 'do they expect us to go? Sick, probably strangers in this part of the country and with hardly enough money to get home.'

Butlin's, it's fair to say, has its particular problem with staff. As with any of the catering industries offering low pay, the camp at Bognor attracts its share of drifters, the educationally sub-normal, 'trouble-makers' and those who are out-and-out unhappy. The highlight of the week for this group is Tuesday, payday, the one-day-weekend. 'It's then,' explains one of the security men in floral-shirted mufti, 'we get the trouble; it rarely comes from the campers. Tuesday night they all go out on the piss-up and then it's bottlings, fist fights or just a kick in the head if you're lucky.' Butlin employees appear before Chichester magistrates with monotonous regularity, a fact which doesn't endear the citizens of Butlinland to the residents of Bognor. 'We daren't say where we come from,' Sonja explains 'but what's more annoying is that it's the nutters who set the standard generally. They don't want the union and they don't ask for more pay . . .'

It's not only the floaters on whom Butlin's relies for its staff or those, optimistically, trying to save money; it also depends upon the lonely and the starstruck. Those who don't object to providing cutprice labour – if it means the fulfilment of a few dreams. A fending-off of isolation.

George is 74, partially deaf and a retired comedian, a lover of the music hall. For 20 years, he says, he looked after an 'elderly' lady and when she died, he wanted company so he came to Butlin's for a season. He keeps coming back. From midnight until 6.30 in the morning, he cleans the large entertainment complex known as the Princes. 'You see some sights,' he says, 'but I get used to it. And not everyone can say they have the pleasure of washing a Princess each night.' He adds the 's' for the sake of patter. The others say he is a hard worker, his net pay is around £20 a week, more if he works overtime.

Don and Ann took their jobs when retirement lost its interest. Don, 67, works in allocations. Ann, 63, is in the shop. She is chubby, cheerful and charming enough to win a Butlin's competition. 'I hadn't worked for 30 years,' she says, 'but Don wanted to do it so I agreed. We love it, we shan't know what to do when we go home. We hardly see a soul there.' Ann admits that sometimes she does get a 'bit tired'. On the previous day, she had gone through six and a half receipt books. 'But it's worth it for the friendship,' she says. And the £23 gross a week.

Ken is a Redcoat. In the old days, the 'Red and Whites' had to be entertainers now that is left to the professionals. Today, all a Redcoat has to be is keen – and able, able enough to keep up with the guests' insatiable appetite for new events. Most of the 40 or so Reds at Bognor are ex-Butlin holiday-makers who see the job either as a quick and temporary route to 'a lot of talent' as a way to meet the stars or quite simply as a calling. 'Everyone wants to be a Redcoat,' says Ken, a wages clerk in the winter, 'because the blazer gives you the authority to be the person you really are . . .' He squeezes the cheek of a middle-aged lady. 'All right my love?' She squeals in delight. 'See what I mean?'

Work that day had begun at 8.30 with breakfast duty, two hours in Reception at the 'Ask Me' desk, competitions in the afternoon, the variety theatre in the evening and dancing in the ballroom at night, gross pay, £23 a week – £19 in the pocket. 'No one does this for the money,' Ken says.

Redcoats, like a number of the staff, shun most of the canteen food and live on a diet of hamburgers, sausage rolls and gingerbread men. 'Whatever they pay us,' Ken adds, 'they get back in the stuff we buy to stop from feeling hungry.' In September, when the last of the guests depart until Christmas, the Redcoats get a bonus, a little over £20 and then another £27 five weeks after they return for another season. No return, no bonus. 'Working on a camp has a psychology about it,' Ken explains, 'you keep saying at the beginning, you won't be able to stand it, you're going to leave, but somehow you never do . . . and Butlin's knows that.'

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London Diary

☐ Many years have passed since I taught constitutional history, a subject I never fully understood. However I remember enough to know that we have no Declaration or definition of political rights. Our rights are those of free citizens who can do whatever custom or statute law allows so long as we do not infringe the freedom of others. The talk about the right to hold demonstrations is therefore in my opinion misplaced. The test is purely practical: whether sanctioning a demonstration or refusing to do so – a different thing from banning it – will cause less trouble. I doubt whether demonstrations have much political effect except when they provoke violence and then the effect is to harm the cause they are championing. I once marched from Aldermaston to Trafalgar Square and very inspiring it was. We really thought we were bringing the good news from Ghent to Aix. Maybe the march drew attention to CND. But so far as CND achieved anything, this was done by hard rational argument in speeches and pamphlets. Like Boswell instructed to pull at a useless rope during a storm in the Hebrides, demonstrations give people a deceptive feeling that they are achieving something. Did the hunger marches of the Thirties achieve anything? It does not seem so from the historical evidence now available. The only way to answer a provocative demonstration is to ignore it. Any demonstration will fall flat if it marches through empty streets.

☐ When the Common Market was forced on us we were offered glamorous prospects. We should all be better off though how we should benefit was rarely defined. In one particular it was. We were assured that, whatever else happened, the Common Market would mean cheaper fruit and vegetables. This promise has not been fulfilled. Apples present the most flagrant case. Before we entered the Common Market English apples were the finest in the world. Now they have disappeared. Maybe the season is too early for Cox's Orange Pippins. But what has happened to such summer varieties as Beauty of Bath and Worcester Pearmains? Instead we are offered a continental apple called Golden Disgusting or something of that kind, a variety never known previously. The price of this uneatable fruit is 40p a pound. Once upon a time English children munched apples constantly, which was pleasanter than sucking sweets and also better for them. Now apples have become a luxury, a rare delicacy in most homes. The cause is not a bad season, as is sometimes alleged. It springs solely from the whim of some bureaucrat in Brussels who ordered the English apple out of existence. I was always against 'going into Europe' as it was called. English apples are enough in themselves to justify our coming out. We are assured that apples did us no good and that for our teeth's sake we should do better to nibble a piece of cheese. As Boulestin said long ago, 'this talk about vitamins does no good at all'.

☐ Another vaunted reform, I am glad to observe, is now in trouble. This is the disruption of local government, imposed by the Conservatives three years ago. It involved the destruction of counties which had been part of our history for a thousand years. The Ridings of Yorkshire went. Shropshire was turned into Salop for no conceivable reason. I am particularly aggrieved that Hawkshead, where Wordsworth went to school, is no longer part of 'Lancashire north of the sands'. Preposterous new units were created such as Avon and Humberside. Do the inhabitants of Hull really feel that they are no longer Yorkshiremen? And now it turns out that the upheaval was all a mistake. The institutions so laboriously created are to be unwound. We know well what will follow. The existing bureaucrats will be retained at their inflated salaries and a new set of bureaucrats will be added unto them. I should like to see a return to true local government with each parish running its own affairs and citizens deciding things for themselves instead of having plans thrust upon them. In the hackneyed phrase, experts should be on tap, not on top. This is now a Utopian dream, deriving from that impractical idealist William Morris. The basis of our present system is the dogma that ordinary citizens are imbeciles, a dogma imposed upon us, I fear, by the Fabians.

☐ Foreign importations sometimes bring pleasure though not always. Water skiing for example is no doubt great fun for those who practise it but it is intolerable for those who do not. The noise of the motor boats ruins the peace of our beaches and of the Lake District. Skate boards are much better. The enthusiasm for them has been the most delightful event of recent years. The performance of a skate-board expert is a beautiful sight, comparable to the most elegant ballet. Even beginners develop a grace of movement. I like, too, the ritual costume, complete with crash helmets and knee guards. It is as though Martians have landed. An additional pleasure in visiting the South Bank concert halls is to see the skate boarders performing their feats in the open crypt which was previously unused. The skate boarders are there when you go into a concert and emerge when you come out. We are united in our different enjoyments. There is talk of creating skateboard rinks with the performers segregated from the public. I suppose this will be welcome to the experts. But I shall be sorry if it means the end of the skateboarders on the South Bank or on the slopes of Parliament Hill. In Buxton when I was a boy the main road from Manchester was closed one winter to make a toboggan run. Skate-boarders should enjoy equal liberty.

☐ Economic affairs have always been baffling to me. Now, I am glad to observe, they are also baffling to the economists. For the last three years they have attributed all our woes, or many of them, to the rise in the price of oil. Now oil prices are falling and are likely to fall further. What will happen when there are no longer millions of Arab money sloshing round the world? Meanwhile the Government have unobtrusively adopted the policies of their critics. Monetarism has triumphed. Government departments are complacently spending less than their allotted sums. Dividend control is being cautiously dismantled. Wage controls are sure to go as well, whatever Callaghan and others may say Enoch Powell, it seems, has been right all along. Not that this will do him much good. The Labour Government will be as confident in its new policy as it was in its old. Jim Callaghan becomes more like Baldwin every day. And little did I think to see my old friend Michael Foot as the greatest political manager since the Duke of Newcastle. Now that I come to think of it Jim and Michael are also in their way skate-boarders. They make less noise than the originals but they are equally elegant and equally skilful in avoiding the successive crashes that seem to be inevitable. Long may their ingenious footwork keep them spinning.

☐ References to Tom Driberg's sexual habits still rumble on. I have a confession to make: I believed the stories. On reflection I realise my mistake. What is the evidence for Tom's homosexual practices? None except that provided by Tom himself. He said he had been arrested. He said he had enjoyed a Norwegian sailor. No one ever claimed to have seen him in action. All they saw was Tom disappearing behind a lavatory door. It is now clear to me that Tom invented the whole thing, a prank characteristic of the Twenties when he and I grew up. This explains the mystery why the Conservatives never framed him when he was chairman of the Labour Party: there was nothing to frame. Maybe Tom had mild homosexual tastes. More likely he started the myth to draw attention to himself and then found it useful. Others have to work hard if they are to achieve fame. Tom had it made for him: a homosexual of legendary achievement. Then he sat back and enjoyed the fun. At any rate I wish I found writing this Diary as easy as he did.

A. J. P. Taylor

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Walden says he has no regrets about leaving politics and finds the problems of his new job challenging. 'You are faced with, say, an exclusive interview with a Chilean communist nobody has ever heard of. Do you have a 15-minute build-up saying why everyone should have heard of this unknown dago, or do you put him straight on and say this is an exclusive interview with an unknown dago? I'd put him on straight.' – *Sunday Times* (C. Apperley)

☐ Using a book, for instance. Most students will read a book from cover to cover. This is rarely a sensible way to tackle any book in a course of higher education, except possibly in literature. – *Sunday Times* (Marian Campbell)

☐ He admires country music – a style he has played in the past and may get into again – 'because it deals with real things. It's real like *Crossroads* is a real business it's ordinary like people's lives.' – Elvis Costello quoted in the *Guardian* (A. Mason)

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Mervyn Jones

Dream Machines

You're flying through the air. Standing boldly upright in your chariot, you use one hand to balance yourself negligently against a slight rocking movement and wave to the admiring crowds below with the other. A gentle wind carries you over the roofs and treetops. The element wherein you float is a distillation of silence, peace and tranquillity. After an hour or so, wherever you happen to be, you descend comfortably in some green meadow and smoke a cigarette while waiting for a smiling blonde to appear and join you for dinner at a pleasant country hotel.

It's a dream, isn't it? A dream that restores the charm and elegance of an England unsullied by jet planes, power stations, punk rock, soccer hooliganism and the National Front. But, 20 or 30 times a year, the dream becomes reality for the fortunate members of the British Balloon Club. Here we are at Canford Magna, a few miles from Wimborne Minster in the lovely and relatively changeless county of Dorset – even the names on the map seem to guarantee happiness. And, speaking of names, those of the balloons are delightful fancies; one is 'Gemini', another is 'Bacchus'. Most appositely of all, there's a balloon called 'The Dream Machine'.

A balloon is made of nylon, the panels in bright colours; one of them is an entrancing patchwork of sky-blue and rose-pink. When inflated, it's about twice as high as a house and contains up to 84,000 cubic feet of hot air. The hot air is generated in a vivid flame from canisters of liquid propane, carried in the basket. Rolled up, the balloon can be carried in a light van or in a small trailer behind a car. Most balloons are made by a firm called Cameron Balloons, with a factory in Bristol. The baskets, of sturdy wickerwork, are generally made in workshops for the blind, also in Bristol. One way or another, everything in the ballooning world has something to do with Bristol.

Balloon ascents – and admiring crowds – date back to the 18th century. They were all the rage during the Edwardian years in an ambience of Panhard cars, luxuriant moustaches, and stunning gals with floral hats and parasols. The advent of the aeroplane, and two world wars, caused ballooning to languish. A revival began only about a dozen years ago, maybe as a backlash against the frenetic Sixties. A quintessential figure at Canford Magna is Joe Philp, a man with a neatly pointed beard (style of Napoleon III) and an amiably sardonic turn of speech. He wears tweed breeches (style of the young Shaw), a natty orange-brown jacket and a yellow waistcoat with large gold buttons. 'I'd say that Joe doesn't do anything much except ballooning,' a friend tells me. Joe himself says that he works for an electronics firm. 'Only in the winter, though. They don't seem to mind much what I do in the summer.'

Peter Bish, secretary of the club, is an air traffic controller and very glad to be away from Heathrow just at present. He is the leading spirit in the Dante Group, owner of one of the balloons competing today. 'A bit of inferno, plenty of paradiso,' he explains. The group was formed by six friends who were together at Bristol University. On this occasion the pilot of the jointly-owned balloon is to be Ian Brereton, notable for his splendid ginger moustache. In a lyrical style that perhaps owes something to his profession (he's in PR) he describes the attraction of ballooning.

'It's a pleasure that you can't get in any other way. Once you're up there, you have absolute peace and absolute freedom. And then, no two flights are ever the same. You're not programmed – you've no idea how long you'll stay up or where you'll come down. Yes, the uncertainty is the cream in the cake.'

There's a team here from British Airways, flying a balloon called 'Concorde'. 'No noise problems,' they cheerfully agree. There's also a team of Army men; their pilot is Regimental Sergeant-Major Jim Howard of the Royal Armoured Corps. They're careful to tell me that their balloon has no official Army support; they have to finance it themselves and fly in their spare time. And there's a team backed by Dry Blackthorn Cider, of Taunton. Tim Wallis, who works for the firm, says that he talked the directors into providing sponsorship with the argument that balloons have the same image as cider – tranquillity, relaxation. The pilot is Phil Dunnington. He doesn't work for Dry Blackthorn, but he was a friend of Tim's at (yes) Bristol University.

A balloon costs about £2,500, plus another £350 for the basket. The propane works out at £15 an hour. Unless sponsored, balloonists either have private means or earn money by giving displays at various fairs and fêtes, sometimes charging children for short rides. Pilots need a licence, obtained by a period of instruction (12 hours minimum) and by passing the exams in navigation, meteorology and air law which are also taken by aeroplane pilots. Quite a number of them are in fact airline pilots, or have jobs somewhere in the aviation industry.

Ballooning is anything but fiercely competitive. The pilots – no more than 150 altogether – are all friends. The word 'race' is used for want of another, but doesn't accurately describe what happens. It is impossible to increase the speed of a balloon, whose pace depends entirely on the wind; moreover, you don't fly in winds of over ten knots. It is also impossible to steer a balloon. All you can do is go up or down, deciding this by turning the propane-blower on and off. The skill rests in catching the wind, which of course varies according to height. Another skill is map-reading – not so easy from above as one might imagine. As a destination you're given a precise map reference, and the winner of the event is the man who lands closest to it, entirely regardless of the time he takes.

The field at Canford Magna is amply endowed with women, or girls, all good-looking and mostly blonde. Generally, they are supporters and helpers. One of them ascends with Sergeant-Major Howard (she can't weigh more than seven stone, and it's desirable to keep the basket light). But a girl with the 'Bacchus' team tells me that retrieval is just as much fun as going up. Retrieval means following by car, finding a route by back roads and doing your best to keep the balloon in sight. The retriever phones the landing position to the check-post, helps to pack up the balloon, and ends up at dinner.

Today there's considerable doubt whether the race will be on. The destination is Corfe Castle, about 12 miles to the south-west. Unfortunately, the wind is in the wrong direction, and likely to waft the balloons over Bournemouth and then out to sea. It's not impossible to come down in a town; you throw out a rope and call upon some startled citizen to pull you to a car park. But a big town like Bournemouth, surrounded by electricity pylons and dotted with high-rise blocks, is too dangerous to be fun and in any case out of bounds by air traffic regulations, which apply to balloons as well as to planes. The prospect of coming down in the sea is even worse. You'd presumably be rescued, a balloon being a highly visible object, but the balloon itself would very likely be ruined.

After some delay, Peter Bish calls the pilots together and announces, 'Hurn (the met. centre at Hurn Airport) insists the wind's OK' – an east wind, or sufficiently east to enable the balloons to clear Bournemouth. Bish doesn't seem convinced, nor does anyone else. Still, everybody wants to fly, and maybe if you gain enough height you'll catch an east-wind current not yet perceptible. The pilots take up their positions a prescribed distance from the still prostrate balloons. Today there's to be a Le Mans start – the pilots running when the signal is given by a smoke grenade.

The moment comes. The teams give the balloons a bit of life by flapping the open edge. Then they start puffing with a windblower, a gadget about the size of an outboard motor. Then, though the basket is still on its side, the hot air is switched on. Majestically, one after another of the eight balloons assumes its rightful shape and billows into an upright position. The baskets settle, bumping lightly on the grass; the crews clamber in. Pilots rarely travel alone – one man can perfectly well handle a balloon, but it's nice to have company.

Joe Philp is in the air within five minutes, closely followed by 'Concorde'. Soon, they're all floating gallantly above the countryside. But alas, it's soon evident that Hurn is wrong. The balloons drift inexorably toward Bournemouth. One after another they descend; nobody goes more than three miles.

Never mind. Dinner has been laid on at the King's Head in Wimborne Minster; pilots and retrievers gather there in unruffled spirits. To travel hopefully is better than to arrive.

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Feeling My Way

Foreign restaurants abroad, still apparently just as anxious to help the currently impoverished and relatively rare English holidaying visitors as they would have been in the days long ago when the continent was permanently flooded with the British loudly demanding guides and Bath buns and foot-warmers and tea, are often given to providing menus in what they hope is an accurate and attractive English. I refuse to believe a friend who claims to have seen in Dieppe *fonds d'artichaut* diminished to 'chokebottoms', but who has not found *tarte maison* masquerading as 'house tart'? On a recent visit I made to Italy, the humble rabbit appeared on the menu more than once. I cannot imagine, and don't care to think, where it came from. The rocky and precipitous hills giving onto the western shores of the Gulf of Salerno would neither facilitate burrows nor feed their inhabitants. However, there available for lunch was stewed rabbit nestling among gravy and a mishmash of vegetables, the ensemble described triumphantly on the menu as 'Rubbit Huntsman Style'. Why the word 'rubbit' allied to 'huntsman' should make me instantly think of Lady Chatterley and her helpful gamekeeper friend I really cannot imagine.

I am not complaining but throughout my entire life nobody at any point has volunteered to provide me with any reliable and comprehensible sexual information of a sober and sensible kind. Nowadays the subject appears, if one can believe the newspapers, to rank in classroom importance with maths and geography, and with the age of the pupil ever decreasing. Soon they will be dragging toddlers from the sand-pit to show them what grown-ups can get up to when conditions are favourable. No such instruction occurred in my youth though I do recall a sort of half-hearted attempt at something in my last year at my prep school. We were in the top form and were being prepared in various ways for the wider world of the public school. The headmaster, a deaf, mahogany-faced Scotsman frequently full of whisky, relished the English language and was skilful at passing on his enthusiasm. But one morning he appeared to have temporarily abandoned Burns and *Julius Caesar* and had changed his line to, had we but known, that of fertilisation. I suppose there was some sort of preamble to prepare us for serious tidings of an intimate kind, but before we could even pause to wonder, we were in the very thick of it. The main flow of the narrative seemed to concern itself with what happened when two people 'loved' each other. 'This little thing provided by the male meets this little thing provided by the female in the female's cave and the little things link up and form a baby.'

Good gracious! What baffling stuff. We stared at each other non-plussed. One could, without much difficulty, identify and locate a 'little thing' about one's person, but could it be indeed this to which the headmaster had been referring? And if so, was not this frankness verging on the 'smutty talk' about which we had been so often warned? Indeed, a ribald section of us had already been in trouble over alleged 'smut'. When the tuneful hymn 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' came up, a popular favourite, in the church whose rear pews we graced for Matins every Sunday, some of us were found tampering with the text. 'Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings', was all right, but on we bellowed with 'He made their gorgeous plumage, He made their tiny things.' 'Things' seemed to be more interesting than 'wings' but we were over-heard and a tremendous ticking-off followed. What would our parents think of us? We had ruined the service and desecrated the House of God (as it was partly composed of corrugated iron and was known to us as the Tin Tabernacle, it seemed as though God's housing plan had broken down). What a mercy that matron's shrill treble had deafened her to our filth. No bathing for a week.

Bathing, which took place from the uninviting and pebbly beaches and in the icy waters of the Solent, unexpectedly provided another small item to add to our limited knowledge of life's mysteries. It was widely known throughout the school that a rather jolly, youngish master called Sinclair ('Sink' to us) had become deeply enamoured of the local dentist's receptionist, a haughty beauty called Miss Bosford. They went walking together and he brought Miss Bosford, much done up, to one of the many school concerts. My friend Williamson claimed to have seen them at dusk locked in a deep embrace behind one of the odoriferous silos that dotted the landscape, but Williamson, a sunny character who liked things to go well, was known to embroider and by general agreement his information was discounted.

But was Williamson so wrong after all, for what was this exciting chat that a starry-eyed Mr Sinclair was pouring out one morning to those of us who sat happily at his table at breakfast? Besotted with Bosford, he was bursting to tell all, discretion thrown to the winds. A bathing picnic the night before. Moonlight, Sausage rolls. A bottle of wine. Miss Bosford, invited to take the water, had announced that she could not swim but added, doubtless proudly, that she could float. She had floated herself out from the shore and Mr Sinclair, positioned behind her and kicking away; had tugged her to and fro by the arms. It didn't sound all that much fun. 'But was it nice, sir?' we asked. 'It was heaven, just heaven,' he briefly replied, and fell silent. We munched on. All were aware that love was in the air and must be respected. But silence didn't prevent us from wondering, if Mr Sinclair and Miss Bosford truly loved one another, if little things were not this very moment joining up in Miss Bosford's cave, which would in due course cause her to abandon her promising career in dentistry.

Thoroughly flummoxed and inadequately equipped in this respect, I pressed on, hot for certainties and with my own physical scenery somewhat changed and embellished, to Oundle, a wholly admirable establishment in every way but at that time strangely shy about coming through with solid information about the subject under discussion. There was information but it was veiled, and there were inexplicable warnings and head-shakings. It seemed to me odd that love and sex, activities so highly praised in literature's pages, should seem to cause the greybeards such intense gloom and anxiety. Nobody at any point allowed that it was quite reasonably enjoyable. When the time for Confirmation came round, my fellow confirmands and I were addressed on Sunday evenings in the Chapel by the headmaster, a pleasant man but whose oratorical powers were limited. Full of supper, one dozed. But on one occasion I woke to find that we had left the sacraments and were back on a subject nearer home. 'You all know to what I am referring. You must all be on your guard, for this thing can wreck lives.' Oh dear. 'Thing' again. This is where I came in.

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Letters to the Editor

In Search of Heretics

Sir, While reading Mr Paul Johnson's onslaught on *The Myth of God Incarnate* (NS 12 August) I found myself recalling what he had written in his prologue to his recently published book *A History of Christianity.* He wrote:

> In the past very few Christian scholars have had the courage or the confidence to place the unhampered pursuit of truth before any other consideration. Almost all have drawn the line somewhere. Yet how futile their defensive efforts have proved! How ridiculous their sacrifice of integrity seems in retrospect! For Christianity, by identifying truth with faith, must teach that any interference with the truth is immoral. A Christian with faith has nothing to fear from the facts; a Christian historian who draws the line limiting the field of inquiry at any point whatsoever, is admiting the limits of his faith.

So where does Mr Johnson stand? Is he in the Church or outside it? Is he a Christian or just a deeply interested onlooker? Is he for us or against us? Has he taken upon himself the role of prophet or has he been called? He never really declares himself and his writings are full of inconsistencies. He says some very stimulating and challenging things but he is also sometimes very silly and very unfair.

Much of the theorising in *The Myth of God Incarnate* is unconvincing and purely spiritual discernment is not given its due weight. But the writers are only carrying on a process which has been going on, on and off, since New Testament times. It is high time the questions they raise were brought to the attention of the public. Biblical scholars have been aware of them for generations. At no time have Christians ever agreed as to what they exactly mean by their credal statements. The more deeply discerning among them have wrestled endlessly with the limitations of language and ritual. By the very nature of the human condition, the dogma of the incarnation is bound to be symbolic and paradoxical. This does not invalidate the concept. The whole of the New Testament is a huge paradox.

It is unwise of Mr Johnson to impugn the intellectual and academic qualifications of the writers. All of them are his superior at least in Biblical studies and they write without rancour. If Mr Johnson is looking for opponents of heavier calibre against whom he can turn his prophetic sword, what about Hans King? There is plenty in *On Being a Christian* for him to have a go at. But he will have met his match.

H. W. LANGHAN

32 Horton View
Banbury

Sir, The discovery of heretics has been for a long time the favoured sport of those who like their Christians clearly defined and predictable. It always adds to the humdrum life of the Church a little of the intrigue that clings to other less important areas of life such as politics and sport. When Paul Johnson calls the authors of *The Myth of God Incarnate* heretics, then he is either exalting them to the level of Luther and Calvin, which would be a little excessive, or he is, as he seems to wish, lowering them to the level of faddish crypto-humanists infiltrating the poor unsuspecting C of E. Please let us read this book for what it is, an honest attempt to evaluate the meaning of Jesus for today. Heresy really is an outmoded concept, and it might surprise Paul Johnson to discover how much of the book is not frightening but stimulating to those of us who within our churches practise theology and attempt to preach the Gospel of God.

DEREK MURRAY

1 Northumberland Street
Edinburgh

Sir, It was odd to find Paul Johnson upholding the conservative Evangelical position in the face of the depredations of radical theologians and odder still to find him doing so in the columns of the NEW STATESMAN. No *statement* of faith can surely be considered definitive, and the authors of *The Myth of God Incarnate* seem to be concerned to give the *substance* of the Thirty-nine Articles a more meaningful form. 'Myth' – meaning not 'something untrue, but 'something of abiding human concern' – is the key concept.

In defence of the Warden of Keble it is worth pointing out that there are enough former members of the college's Boat Club among the present episcopate to form a Bishops' Eight.

H. JONES

7 Edinboro
Ambleside
Cumbria

The Great Australian Emptiness

Sir, We are sick of reading that old 'canard' (NS 5 August) that we, as Australians, committed genocide in slaughtering all the Aboriginal inhabitants of Tasmania, men, women and children. We remind you and your readers that, at that time, Tasmania was a British Crown Colony; that the Governor was an Englishman, and that all the murderers came from the United Kingdom, whether they were soldiers or convicts or free settlers.

G. C. O'DONNELL
D. K. CATTERNS

1/19 Belmont Avenue
Wollstonecraft
Sydney

Sir, Michael Dean's 'The Great Australian Emptiness' – so much better than previous features on the country – arrived in these parts the day Mr Sinclair, a leading minister who wants to be leader of the Country Party, dragged up the well-worn theme of the need to deport Pommy-Commy shop-stewards to protect Australia's strife-torn and inefficient economy. In an unprecedented move Mr Sinclair was actually rebuked by the British High Commission, and it was ironic that this bunch of arrogant Tories, who must have equalled British Airways in their efforts to give Britain a bad name down under, should in turn have been denounced as socialist apologists by Mr Punch, the Country Party leader in New South Wales. Mr Punch's earlier great moment was his denunciation of dole-bludgers and the hand-out society, delivered as a state election broadcast from the stock-yard of his farm, surrounded by his heavily subsidised cattle and sheep. His Liberal allies have not forgiven the subsequent swing which installed a Labour government in the state.

But credit where credit is due. Michael Dean rightly condemns Australia's under-funded education system, but there are oases within the deserts. I am one of many British academics who will be for ever grateful to the research schools of the Australian National University in Canberra for its generous support for post-doctoral work. In addition to its permanent and contract staff, running into hundreds, there is a steady stream of visitors including large numbers of temporary refugees from Britain's hard-pressed and under-paid universities. Certainly Australia still suffers disproportionately from clergymen and lay philistines, but that surely makes it all the more remarkable that the country should have fostered a major international research centre.

GED MARTIN

5 Preston Street,
Weston,
Canberra

Sir, The latest exercise in Aussie-bashing in your pages is as sloppy and unconvincing as ever. However, it is worth pointing out one example at least of ignorance and misuse of easily verifiable facts. The author states, in comparing New Zealand with Australia to the detriment of the latter, that New Zealand gave women the vote 25 years before Britain. Indeed, New Zealand did so in 1895. At that time Australia was not, of course a nation, but a number of separate colonies. Of these however, South Australia granted women the vote in 1894, just one year later than New Zealand, and Western Australia followed in 1899. It was therefore a foregone conclusion that the constitution of the Australian Federation (1902) would include full political rights for women, and the first woman anywhere in the world to stand for election to a national Parliament was Vida Goldstein of Victoria (at the first Senate election of 1903).

The last Australian state to give women the state suffrage, Victoria, did so in 1908, ten years before partial female suffrage in Britain and a full 20 years before British women were allowed equal political rights with men.

DIANNE SCOTT

7 Alexander Street
London W2

Rights and Racists

Sir, The Home Secretary says that to ban the marches of the National Front would be undemocratic. I forget the reasons given by a former Labour Home Secretary, Chuter Ede, for banning the trades union traditional May Day marches in 1949 and 1950. Perhaps the present Home Secretary would remind me.

JOHN GORMAN

Galleywood House
Waltham Abbey
Essex

Sadat's Solitary Hand

Sir, The recent article by Jonathan Dimbleby (NS 12 August) on the regime of President Sadat in Egypt shows just how essential peace in the Middle East should be for Egypt. As is the case in many other Middle Eastern countries a large proportion of the population is near to or below the poverty line, while a small minority is very rich. Yet there is comparatively little state aid available, either as direct cash grants or in the form of food subsidies. Why? Surely because the vast expenses of continual arms purchases and a large standing army will contribute appreciably to the budgetary deficit. Dimbleby makes no mention of this but asserts that, because Israel is refusing to make territorial concessions to *other* countries before peace negotiations even begin, the prospects of peace between Israel and Egypt are 'diminishing by the hour'.

Ever since the international tragedy that is the Arab-Israel conflict began, Israel has maintained her willingness to conduct open negotiations with her neighbours. This they have all

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flatly refused, preferring publicly to deny Israel the right to exist. Until the leaders of the Arab nations realise that Israel is there to stay, and that only through a stable peace will prosperity return to their countries, millions will continue to eke out a precarious existence and be cannon fodder for the egos of their 'leaders'.

BARRY SAMPSON

Upwood
The Warren
Radlett, Herts.

We Never Closed

Sir, A. J. P. Taylor (London Diary 19 August) should read his *Fabian News* more carefully. David Owen was not only flitting between Rhodesia and Washington. He was also due to speak this very weekend (27/28th) at the annual Fabian Summer School. In the event, Southern Africa has spirited him away, but our school has gone on. A hundred Fabians are at present at Dartington hearing, amongst others, Roderick MacFarquahar, Mike Thomas and George Foulkes discuss the problems and implications of nationalism in various parts of the world. Any time Mr Taylor would like to attend such a school – to listen or to speak – and see thinking socialists together, we would be delighted to accommodate him. Despite his Diary comments, the schools do continue.

DIANNE HAYTER
General Secretary

Fabian Society
11 Dartmouth Street
London SW1

This M1

Sir, What is so very This-Englandish about North Warwickshire using a kestrel to symbolise its association with the M1 and the M6? Do not D. M. Shenkin, who sent the quotation in, and your office boy who puts 'This England' together, keep their eyes open? The Midlands motorways have a kestrel every eight or ten miles, by my reckoning; and isn't this, surely, the nicest by-product of all the sterilisation of land these awful roads have entailed?

JOHN LEVITT

2 Hartington Street
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Protected by Mrs Whitehouse

Sir, The repugnance towards homosexuality and lesbianism which is experienced by a happily diminishing number of people is not – as Mary Whitehouse claims in her book and her letter (Letters, 12 August) – 'natural' but is rather a conditioned response which is regenerated and sustained if not by Mrs Whitehouse personally then most certainly by those whom she supports and abets.

ALLAN HORSFALL

57 Bridgewater Street
Little Hulton
Worsley, Manchester

Vue Inferieure

Sir, Your reviewer Alan Ryan says (NS 19 August) that my colleague Peregrine Worsthorne's contribution to *The Future That Doesn't Work* offers 'a very engaging insight into the *vie intérieure* of the editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*'. Neither I, nor my *vie intérieure*, had anything to do with this book. If Mr Ryan were one of my reviewers I would advise him to pay more attention to accuracy in future.

J. W. M. THOMPSON
Editor

Sunday Telegraph
London EC4

F.S.P.

Sir, A. J. P. Taylor is wrong in supposing that F.S.P. stood for 'Field Security Police': the organisation was always called officially 'Field Security Personnel', as Gwynne-Browne states very clearly on page 7. The 'Police' bit had such a horribly Nazi ring about it!

K. A. GILLETT

Bryanston School
Blandford, Dorset

Caught Out

Sir, Paul Johnson is rather too optimistic in his assertion that no one is likely to break Trueman's record of 307 Test Match wickets (NS 19 August). Anyone familiar with the Good Book (page 238 in the 1977 edition) could tell him that a certain L. R. Gibbs has already done precisely that by taking 309 wickets for the West Indies in official Tests and another three for the Rest of the World XI in unofficial matches.

BRIAN ANDREWS

4 Fambridge Road
Dagenham, Essex

Ignorance is Strength

Sir, A survey carried out among sub-editors of the NEW STATESMAN showed that half of them did not know where Buenos Aires was, while the other half believed it to be in Brazil. However, Nick Terdre's Brazilian report (NS 19 August) was sufficiently well-written to withstand even the damage to its credibility afforded by ham-fisted support of this kind.

JAMES BENSON

102 Roebuck House
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London SW1

Press Council Adjudication: One Complaint against NS upheld

The NEW STATESMAN should have published a letter from a former union official at the *Scottish Daily News* in an abridged form agreed with him, the Press Council says today. But the Council rejects two other complaints against the periodical.

It rejected a complaint by the former father (shop steward) of the compositors' chapel at the *SDN*, Mr Kenneth Grant, of 101 Greyfriars Street, Carntyne, Glasgow, that Bruce Page was an unethical choice of reviewer for a book, *The Story of the Scottish Daily News,* by Ron McKay and Brian Barr.

It also rejected a complaint that the Editor Mr Anthony Howard, should not have passed on to Mr Page a letter sent by Mr Grant for publication.

In the letter, Mr Grant asked whether readers could assume an unbiased review from a writer who allegedly had conducted an anti-Robert Maxwell vendetta in the pages of another newspaper and was involved in litigation about it. He said that up to day one of the *SDN* he had been a shop steward, from which position he resigned to concentrate on production priorities as chief reader and deputy caseroom overseer. He was far more comprehensively involved in the struggle for the workers' co-operative newspaper before, during, and after than were the authors of the book or the reviewer.

He said the co-operative had never asked the Government to put up more than £1.2m to keep Maxwell out of the project. The Action Committee (with perhaps two Communist exceptions) and the workers were keen to have Robert Maxwell in the project. Bruce Page had arrived at a wildly wrong conclusion when he wrote about Maxwell's 'decisive stake' in *SDN*.

Five weeks later Mr Grant received a reply from Mr Page, apologising for the delay because he had been away on business. Mr Page said he did not know anyone except Mr Maxwell who alleged that Mr Page had a vendetta against him. He had not meant to suggest in his review that the Government was unhappy about Mr Maxwell's intervention in *SDN*, but that it should have been, in the light of previous history.

Mr Grant complained to the Press Council that Mr Howard should be asked to justify his action in sending Mr Grant's letter to a third party. Mr Howard told him that as his letter would have taken almost half the available space in any given week he had hoped Mr Grant would have been glad to receive a reasoned reply from the contributor.

At an oral hearing, Mr Howard said he had read Mr Grant's letter very carefully indeed and considered it not to be of general appeal. He drew the Committee's attention to a notice in the newspaper that points of interest from unpublished letters would be passed on to the contributor; he would certainly not have cut the letter without referring back to the writer.

Mr Howard said he had not been aware of the background of litigation, but would have disregarded it as being an impossible test for any editor to accept.

On the question of alleged inaccouracies, Mr Page said there was a good deal of supporting evidence in the book that the work force at *SDN* was very unhappy about Mr Maxwell He maintained that what he had to say was justified by the evidence and he believed the quotes he used to represent the truth of the matter.

Mr Grant told the Committee it was not possible for Mr Maxwell to make unilatera decisions. Every decision had to be ratified by the Workers' Committee. He emphasised tha without Mr Maxwell's money and expertise there would have been no co-operative.

The Press Council's adjudication was:

The Press Council does not think that the fact that the reviewer was involved in litigation and might have been regarded as holding some hostile views was a reason why he should not have been asked to write the review. This complaint is rejected.

The Council further considers that the passing of the complainant's letter to the reviewer was in accordance with common practice and was neither objectionable nor unethical. This complaint is rejected.

The Council considers that the situation at the *Scottish Daily News* had been well publicised, and when reviewing what purported to be an authoritative account it would have been relevant to publish an opposing views that the newspaper had beer made aware of.

In this case not only had the Father o the compositors' Chapel who had been inti mately involved in the situation from begin ning to end, put forward opposing views bu he was also alleging that facts in the boo were inaccurate. In the Council's view h letter should have been published in a abridged form agreed with the complainar and they consider that five paragraphs fro the letter would have summarised tl matter. This complaint against the NE STATESMAN is upheld.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

James Fenton

A Man Blind of One Eye

The Notable Man by JOHN GINGER *Hamish Hamilton* £7.95

What is true fame? The ability to turn up in the least likely places. Auden was immensely pleased to learn that a prostitute in an American jail had been heard, on her way to the shower, to utter his line: 'Thousands have lived without love – not one without water.' I first read Oliver Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* in Saigon Zoo, just after Saigon itself had turned, so dramatically, into Ho Chi Minh City. I suppose it was natural that I should be struck by the similarity between the sentiments of the poem and those of the Vietcong. They reach a climax in the final lines (of which the last four were provided by a helpful Samuel Johnson):

> Aid slighted truth, with thy persuasive strain
> Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
> Teach him that states of native
> strength possest,
> Tho' very poor, may still be very blest;
> That trade's proud empire hastes to
> swift decay,
> As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away;
> While self dependent power can time defy,
> As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

But I was particularly astonished, when I mentioned my reactions to an English friend, to hear that he, on a trip to a Vietcong village in Quang Ngai, had been told by his guide: 'You know, I think of myself as the teacher in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*.'

Yes, Goldsmith has achieved true fame in Quang Ngai. But what about England? What about the English-speaking world? Three years ago a certain Professor G. S. Rousseau produced the 'Critical Heritage' volume on Goldsmith. The trouble was, he said in an embarrassed introduction, there *was* no critical heritage. It was all utter bosh. Indeed, he went on ingeniously, the only point of producing such a volume was to show, beyond any shadow of doubt, that Goldsmith's works had attracted no criticism worthy of the name. The best thing he could offer was Henry James's (excellent) introduction to *The Vicar of Wakefield*. But as James said: 'Criticism does not get near the thing at all.' The critics of Goldsmith have tended to adopt one of two tactics – either to say simply, 'Look, this is jolly good/bad', or to go into contortions in order to explain why apparently bad writing might in fact be terribly good. Professor Rousseau is, for a man who spent so much time on his subject, astonishingly dismissive. Goldsmith's periodical literature remains 'interesting primarily to eighteenth-century specialists' and, as for the poems, a few historians have shown a modicum of interest, 'but others, poets most of all, have forgotten them, don't read them, and probably never will again.'

By contrast, a good example of the contortionist school is Tom Davis, the editor of the Everyman *Poems and Plays* (1975), who is very worried by the fact that two of the famous poems, 'When lovely woman stoops to folly' and the ballad 'Turn, gentle hermit of the dale' can only, he thinks, 'be taken seriously if they are read as jokes – in fact, light verse'. If only Goldsmith were taking the piss, we could admire him. But is he? 'There is no ready solution,' says Mr Davis, 'one is left to wonder at the complexity of the central issue, which is Goldsmith's relationship with his audience.' Alas, one is not left wondering at the complexity of this central issue: it is out of the question that either poem (they both appear at serious moments in the *Vicar*) be taken at other than face value. And at face value they do not amount to much.

John Ginger, as biographer of Goldsmith, tends fatally towards the contortionist school. What he can't get his mind around, what worries him, nags at him, dogs his steps, is the well-documented evidence that the man was a blithering idiot. Mr Davis cannot see how the author of two great poems can write twaddle, but he at least has some evidence that there were times when Goldsmith's jokes were misunderstood, and therefore taken for idiocies. Mrs Piozzi recorded that, when Goldsmith heard that a rival play by Hugh Kelly was going much better than his *Good-Natured Man*, he gazed into the mirror at his notoriously ugly face and said: 'A handsomer Fellow than Kelly however.' Mrs Piozzi tells the story against Goldsmith. Mr Davis thinks the remark may have been 'a marvellously inspired inconsequentiality'. Mr Ginger, who deals with Kelly in detail, does not mention the story. One cannot help feeling that he is inclined to be overprotective towards his subject.

But it's 200 years too late to be protective towards a man who was so mercilessly teased by his contemporaries, who was forced to play court jester to his distinguished friends. Burke, who later wept at the news of Goldsmith's death, pretended one day at Reynolds's house to have taken deep offence at something. Goldsmith, worried, asked him what it was. Burke eventually said that 'he was really ashamed to keep up an intimacy with one who could be guilty of such monstrous indiscretions as Goldsmith had just exhibited in [Leicester] Square.' Goldsmith replied that he could not imagine what was meant. 'Why,' said Burke, 'did you not exclaim, as you were looking up at those women, what stupid beasts the crowd must be for staring with such admiration at those *painted Jezebels*, while a man of your talents passed by unnoticed?' 'Surely, surely, my dear friend,' replied Goldsmith, who had indeed said nothing of the sort, 'I did not say so?' Burke: 'Nay, if you had not said so, how should I have known it?' Goldsmith ('with great humility'): 'That's true. I am very sorry; it was very foolish. *I do recollect that something of the kind passed through my mind, but I did not think I had uttered it.*' John Forster, the 19th-century biographer, remarks that Burke in fact emerges from the story with less credit than Goldsmith. John Ginger, who has much to say about Burke, once again does not record it.

He does mention that Goldsmith held foolish views about the movement of the upper jaw. Quite how delicious they were I would not have guessed, until coming across this passage in *Animated Nature*.

> The under jaw in man possesses a great variety of motions; while the upper has been thought, by many, to be quite immovable. However, that it moves in man, a very easy experiment will suffice to convince us. If we keep the head fixed, with anything between our teeth, the edge of a table for instance, and then open our mouths, we shall find that both jaws recede from it at the same time; the upper jaw rises, and the lower falls, and the table remains untouched between them. The upper jaw, therefore, has motion as well as the under; and, what is remarkable, it has its proper muscles behind the head, for thus raising it and depressing it.

One imagines Goldsmith, who afterwards angrily defended these views, biting into the edge of the table to prove his point.

'A man blind of one eye should always be painted in profile,' wrote Goldsmith (he was arguing that many of Shakespeare's scenes should be forgotten, 'for the honour of our country, and for his honour too'). Mr Ginger has given us a portrait in three-quarter profile, so that the blemishes cannot be hidden, but nor are they fully exposed. A large amount of research has gone into this book, and a large amount of effort has clearly been spent on writing it. (No effort at all has been spent on proof-reading it – Hamish Hamilton should suspend their proof-readers at once, pending a full inquiry.) Where Mr Ginger is dealing with the contemporary world of Goldsmith he is generally very good, but my guess is that in dealing with the man himself he was afraid of giving in to the anecdotes, surrendering to the opinions of Boswell and Johnson and Garrick and the rest. He values the evidence of Reynolds more highly, because Reynolds seems to value Goldsmith more highly. But in the end, once he was dead, they all felt his loss.

> Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness call'd Noll
> Who wrote like an angel, but talk'd like poor Poll.

Garrick's anticipatory epitaph, which stung Goldsmith into composing the best of his light verse, *The Retaliation*, sums up the paradox perfectly. Goldsmith was one of that second generation of independent authors who had the courage to break away from aristocratic patronage and rely on their appeal to the public. But public taste at the time was notoriously corrupted – Garrick was the king of corruption –

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and it required real courage to face the London audience. Both of Goldsmith's plays ran counter to contemporary taste. Both have survived. The two poems on which Goldsmith would have based his claim to immortality, *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*, remain, flawed as they are, a vindication of that claim. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, with one of the worst plots ever devised (so bad is it, one ceases to pity the vicar in his tribulations; instead one pities the author, for having painted himself into so awkward a corner), quickly established an international reputation. Its influence shines through in Goethe's novels. It's like nothing else on earth – a sort of cross between *Rasselas* and *The Diary of a Nobody*. As for the Chinese letters that form *The Citizen of the World*, those I have read seem to me much more accessible and enjoyable than, for instance, Addison's essays. All in all, Goldsmith did not do too badly.

But he would never be at ease with his achievement. He lived in a glittering society, the best London had to offer. He was hopelessly vain and arrogant, as well as hopelessly humble. He was given to passionate jealousy, and yet he was most generous. He was given to futile lying, as well as honesty beyond the call of duty. He seems to have had no sex life, and yet he liked to think of himself as a rake. He was one of the only men who dared stand up to Johnson, and one of the least equipped to do so. Everybody liked him, and yet he had no friends. He was sensitive to a degree, but, as both Johnson and John Ginger conclude, he had no feelings for other people. He was, in short, a mess. How typical that after a lifetime of pretending to be a Doctor (he had failed the most elementary medical examination), he should have insisted on poisoning himself with Doctor James's Fever Powders. His last words are most touching. 'Your pulse,' said Doctor Turton, 'is in greater disorder than it should be, from the degree of fever which you have. Is your mind at rest?' 'No,' said Goldsmith, 'it is not.'

W. L. Webb

Neues Deutschland

Socialism with a German Face: the State that Came in from the Cold by JONATHAN STEELE *Cape* £6.95

Writing about East Germany for British readers, there are two Walls to be got over, the first being the ramshackle but formidable barricade of native indifference and prejudice. There's the traditional antipathy to anything German which, when it's not just war-surplus Kraut-hating, manifests itself as the most resolute form of national indifference to other cultures. Then, almost at once, you find yourself also up against a growing historical amnesia and our own British brand of prudery about what political ideas it's respectable to discuss in public.

Jonathan Steele tackles all these problems head-on, beginning with a double title that nicely encapsulates his main provocations. The State that Came in from the Cold, to take his subtitle first, brings you smartly to the foot of the other Wall but also to a view of our dim perceptions of what lies behind it. Admittedly it's a bloody and awful reality that sometimes makes most other places in Europe seem rather unreal, and has turned Berlin into a war memorial to end all war memorials. But it also does duty as a very stagey stage-set for Cold War games, among them the pseudo-stoic spy story whose shabby romanticism is actually a denial of politics in general, as well as of the life going on behind the stage.

What does go on behind it Steele calls Socialism with a German Face, making the point that the GDR is much more traditionally German than the highly Americanised Federal Republic, and preparing for his resounding conclusion:

> Its overall social and economic system is a presentable model of the kind of authoritarian welfare states which Eastern European nations have now become. Totalitarianism is no longer a useful concept to describe Eastern Europe . . . Within a centralised pattern of political organisation, Eastern Europe has produced a variant of the welfare state which is different from Scandinavian socialism and English or West German social democracy, but which deserves close inspection . . . Socialism in the GDR is as much a part of the socialist tradition as any of its other manifestations elsewhere in the world.

Between the titles and the conclusion lies a remarkable story, with many strange turns and subplots. Since a paradoxical effect of accepting the independence of a socialist German state is to make you think about its shared past, I missed some account of the drastic historical amputations involved in Germany's division: the severance of Leipzig from Frankfurt, Dresden from Munich, Weimar from Bonn. Talking to Hans Magnus Enzensberger earlier this year, I was shaken to realise that a German poet with such a profound sense of history thought first and instinctively of Dresden – a cradle of Romanticism and Expressionism, where Wagner and Bakunin were on the barricades together in 1848 – as 'a town in the GDR'.

The history of the division itself, on the other hand, and of the unmatched miracle wrung out of the rump territories in the east, is admirably clear and full of helpful perspectives. It's useful, for example, to set beside accounts of the Soviet soldiery's licentiousness the fact that 'Russia had liberated Berlin unaided and at a cost of 305,000 men killed or wounded, half as many again as the Americans and British had lost in the whole of 1945'; and fascinating to learn of George Kennan's memorandum of 6 March 1946, recommending to the State Department an 'endeavour to rescue Western zones of Germany by *walling them off against* Eastern penetration'.

Walter Ulbricht, unlovable and unmourned, is rightly seen as the formidable Saxon Bismarck of the state centred on what was left of Prussia. He overcame at last the Russians' stubborn wish for a unified, neutral German buffer state, and survived both the uprising of 1953 and the propaganda defeat of the Wall whose building had become the precondition for the building of his New Germany. It is right, too, to recall that there was no terror in his Berlin to match the Kafka-like Slanksy trials in Prague and the Rajk trials in Budapest; and to point out that the often tedious East German press, for all its Byzantine listing of dignitaries present at meetings and inscrutability as to matters discussed or conclusions reached, has its moments of independence; reporting of Watergate, for example, was extensive and usually accurate, while the Moscow papers kept a tactful, Big Power silence.

Plainly Steele's book is written to redress the balance of accounts generally available here, a proper intention which hasn't prevented the author from seeing and indicating clearly enough the hard contradictions that flourish under what Wolf Biermann in exile more rudely calls 'this heavy-arsed feudal socialism'. A full church service with music is broadcast on the state radio every Sunday: yes, but practising Christians rarely get places in the bulging universities. The solid party member does his committed stint by day; and in the evening, courtesy of West German television, drops in on a world he's still unlikely to be able to visit in any other way.

If the Old Adam survives in this Neues Deutschland, so, to an amazing extent, does the old Germany; not in the form of being soft on old Nazis – Steele fairly scotches most such charges as propaganda mythology – but, for example, in the revival of academic and medical titles and the extension of such antique courtesies to less grand callings. ('Railwayman emeritus', for example, will surely be conferred one day on the young *Deutsche Reichsbahn* clerk I sat opposite on the S-Bahn in March: silver braided epaulettes, glossy peaked cap, white shirt, tie and gleaming shoes, and open on his lap what was clearly a long classic novel carefully jacketed in a handstitched leather reading-case.) Older West German tourists, too, uneasy with the shiny brutalism of their own *Wirtschaftswunder*, are charmed to find on their newly permitted sentimental journeys to the Eastern provinces (10 million went there in 1973) much of the Germany they remember from their childhood.

And in case that sounds merely quaint, one should be clear that 'the marriage of German traditions to the goal-directed philosophy of a Communist state' has also produced more dynamic results. For example, vastly productive steel and chemical industries in a country where smoky, low-grade lignite was the only indigenous fuel; and a *per capita* income that exceeded ours three years ago. Indeed, the GDR offers

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plenty to bring a gleam to the eye of the CBI, not least the massive concentration on science and technical subjects in the school curriculum, the links between schools and local industry, and the thought that goes into ways of mobilising the workforce.

Time has overtaken the author to the extent that he was unable to deal with the surprisingly audible reaction of some intellectuals to the expulsion of Wolf Biermann, and the suggestion that perhaps 100,000 applications for exit visas have accumulated in the in-tray since Helsinki (though some of his information on the not insignificant number of those who have tried the 'individualism' of the West and returned to the 'collectivism' of the East is relevant here too). What would happen if the Wall came down may still be the overriding question, though no one believes that it will be put to the test in the foreseeable future. What this useful and timely book does do is to turn your mind to a more fundamental question implicit in a comment Georg Lukacs once made to me (as no doubt to many another Western visitor with uncertain ideological credentials). 'People used to believe in a body-soul dichotomy, and now we are growing out of that,' said the sage. 'Soon they will also cease to believe in an individual-society dichotomy.' In East Germany, as elsewhere, that's a political consummation most devoutly to be wished.

Craig Raine

Crikey!

The Best of Eagle edited by Marcus Morris
Michael Joseph/Ebury Press £5.95

Actually, we lived in a prefab and read the *Beano*. Kids who took the *Eagle* brought Blue Riband biscuits to school and had fathers who voted Conservative. *Eagle* was posh. Just the same, it filtered down and I still possess *Eagle Annual Number One*, passed on to me by my cousin Brynley – a dapper little chap (as his name suggests) with a clip-on tartan bow-tie, a Jeff Arnold watch, a model aeroplane and other signs of affluence like braces. Half-immersed in a white fur rug, he carelessly consumed Macdonald's Chocolate Marshmallows and turned over the pages of his *Eagle* in the shadow of the family piano. Brogued bits of Meccano lay around waiting to be pilfered. He had all the social skills: I remember watching him tap a mesmeric foot to the tune of 'I Scream, You Scream, We All Scream for Ice Cream . . .'

Meanwhile, I mooched about in a pair of baseball boots mended with a bicycle repair kit, eating ketchup on bread, staring at a wart on my finger the size and texture of a brussel sprout. Inside, mother baked butterfly cakes and dilated sarcastically on 'shop-bought rubbish'. Secretly, we all yearned for the expensive, egg-less sort. Then *Eagle Annual* arrived, worn at the corners, on a pile of thumbed women's magazines. I was gratifyingly immune to print and therefore skipped most of the hortatory propaganda: 'hobbies', like 'pocket money', were things that other kids had, so I was never tempted to make a jet-propelled car with a Sparklets bulb (whatever that was). On the other hand, I was susceptible to pictures. After a glance at Luck of the Legion, I went about for a week with a white handkerchief tucked into the back of my cap, ordering the dog to about-face or wooing it with words of French culled from the strip ('oo-ee, mon pet it'). The medieval element was a strong influence too: as a result, mother was cajoled into making me a suede money bag with a draw-string and five polished threepenny bits for sovereigns. I used to sit on the wall, spurring the frisky brick, the better to distribute this ersatz largesse to the dog below.

Mostly, though, as this re-issue confirms, the middle-class ethos of *Eagle* was infinitely remote from the lives of working class children. If it supplied the name for a gang (the Blue Pearl Gang), it left you to invent the enrolment ritual – in our case, peeing into a bottle and letting lighter fuel from a plastic torpedo burn on the palm of your hand. And its suggested 'activities', like rearing silk worms, bore no resemblance to our meetings, where we planned raids on greenhouses, smoked dumps or watched Brian Fish eat a live worm. *Eagle* impinged only on the middle-class sector of one's life – school. I once came top in composition by cribbing the life of Albert Schweitzer from the annual and professing a desire to become a missionary. It was an act of pure calculation, the act of a spiv, a canny perversion of everything decent that *Eagle* stood for. Crikey!

Dan Dare epitomised the MRA ethic, developing as he did from a crusading parson called Lex Christian. If the enemy weren't cowed by his Pitman's Shorthand eyebrows and his monkey-wrench mouth, he persuaded them with his fists. The enemy, of course, were the Treens – a sublimated melange of middle-class phobias. Their dress was the brass hoops of the negro; their features exaggeratedly oriental; their orientation intellectual. What, after all, was the Mekon if not a brain on a bed-pan, the antithesis of muscular Christianity? The other enemies of the middle-class were bought with walk-on parts – Hank, the token American, Pierre, the token Frog, represented acceptable foreigners, our allies. No Mishima or Klaus though. Digby, the valet from Wigan, represented the working class – an albino buffoon with trembling wattles.

On the surface, however, everything was sweetness and light, except for the odd slip like Macdonald Hastings's expedition 'in search of the Little Yellow Men' of the Kalahari desert. (Yellow?). Learie Constantine, for example, was duskily portrayed demonstrating the hook shot. Harris Tweed affectionately ironised the overall atmosphere of 'up chaps and at 'em'. For all that, one look at the photograph of prep school boys wilting in their blue gaberdines, or a glimpse of Professor Brittain sucking his house-masterly briar, and you wonder why they didn't call it *Beagle*.

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JOHN MURRAY

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David Caute

Winning

A Critique of Arms: Vol. I by REGIS DEBRAY translated by Rosemary Sheed *Penguin* £2.95

In 1967 Régis Debray achieved world-wide fame virtually overnight. With a single short book – *Revolution in the Revolution?* – he joined Guevara, Fanon and Mao on the short list of indispensable revolutionary reading (and in those days one did not water one's wine). Two contingent factors catapulted Debray's ardent but juvenile eulogy of the armed guerrilla *foco* to prominence. The author had rapidly gained the full confidence of Castro and Guevara, resulting in a first edition of 200,000 copies published in Havana – indeed an entry in Guevara's Bolivian diary dated 12 April 1967 reads: 'I started giving a brief course on Debray's book.' Secondly, and even more salesworthily, Debray was already imprisoned and under potential sentence of death in Barrientos's Bolivia when *Revolution in the Revolution?* was published in North America and Europe.

This young (26) *normalien* and pupil of Louis Althusser had spent some weeks with Guevara's guerrillas in Bolivia before his capture. Sartre informed a mass meeting in Paris that Debray's crime had been to write a book which 'removes all the brakes from guerrilla activities'. Alas: in October Guevara was captured and executed, the prelude to a series of calamities throughout Latin America, including the deaths of Inti Peredo in Venezuela and Marighela in Brazil. During the 1970s the urban-based guerrilla (terrorist) movements have been crushed one by one, the Allende experiment in the constitutional path to socialism (which Debray witnessed at first hand) was bloodily smashed, and the power of American monopoly capital, lurking behind the military juntas, appears more firmly entrenched than ever.

Debray's new book is an extensive theoretical re-evaluation of the traumatic collapse of the revolutionary barometer. Although he remains a faithful and ardent young Robin to such Batmen as Castro and Che, a good deal of the boyish romanticism has ebbed from Debray's pen. No longer does he write, as he did ten years ago:

> The revolutionary guerrilla force is clandestine. It is born and develops secretly. The fighters themselves use pseudonyms. At the beginning they keep out of sight, and when they allow themselves to be seen it is at a time and place chosen by their chief.

(Indeed Che's Bolivian diary provides a bitter, gruelling commentary on the reality behind these Indian war whoops.) At the same time, wrestling with the problem of leadership, the role of the famous 'vanguard', Debray is less cocksure now that, 'No political front which is basically a deliberate body can assume leadership of a people's war; only a technically capable executive group . . . a general staff' demanding a 'temporary suspension' of inner-party democracy.

Yet it is my impression that Debray remains no wiser about democracy, no more sensitive to the fact that its suspension is scarcely ever 'temporary'; in his view both 'socialism' and 'the revolution' – two tidy packages he never disturbs – came to fruition in Cuba, but not elsewhere in Latin America. Debray is interested in success, the physical triumph of 'the revolution' over its universal enemy, 'the empire'. And while prepared to embark with relish on an elaborate theoretical critique of his own exaltation of the military *foco*, he sensitively reacts to criticisms by Trotskyists, Communists and bloodstained Latin American leftists by pointing out that the central thesis of *Revolution in the Revolution?* was derived by analogy or adaptation from Lenin's vanguard theory in *What is to be Done?* And Lenin, after all, succeeded, yes?

There are several Debrays. His prose constantly glances warily over its own shoulder, fending off potential charges of sterile scholasticism, Lenin-worship or Left Bank dilettantism by means of brilliant fusillades directed against sterile scholasticism, Lenin-worship and Left Bank dilettantism. He is capable of writing history with marvellous cogency, perception and clarity, and yet, tormented by the burden of awareness that Paris imposes on its cleverest sons, feels he must also prove his ability to integrate the latest structuralist vocabulary into his political philosophy. Debray has evidently read everything – and wishes us to know it.

A Critique of Arms reminds one that the core argument between reformists (whom Debray utterly despises) and revolutionaries concerns not only the mechanics of change but also, more vitally, priorities in behaviour. In Debray's view, urban or rural guerrillas of middle-class background run the risk not only of liquidation, but also of distorting socialist values, by acting independently of the proletariat and peasantry. Reformists on the other hand stubbornly insist that only by working within the framework of 'bourgeois-democratic' legality can any socialist movement preserve its democratic character. (Debray, by the way, scoffs at armchair friends of Cuba who go into a spin because some poet is detained for 37 days; he doesn't mention the 15-20,000 long-term political prisoners.) It is worth quoting a passage in which Debray excoriates the qualms and quibbles of the hypocritical reformists:

> If you, as a socialist, accede to power by one means or another, they at once have you in a dilemma. If you respect their freedoms – their press and radio, their law courts and their 'dirty tricks' – there will soon be chaos, anarchy and a general crisis of authority; they will then take over . . . If, on the other hand, you counter-attack . . . giving the people responsibility for defending themselves . . . an eye for an eye . . . you will be a totalitarian, paranoid despot, a neo-Stalinist . . . Left-wing intellectuals in Europe . . . will even send you . . . indications of their 'disgust' . . . Since whatever you do is bound to be wrong, it is better to lose your reputation for humanitarianism than to lose power and your life.

The psychology behind this passage is perhaps clearer to me than it is to Debray: the Latin American revolutionary emerges as a child seeking the good opinion of its parents (Paris, etc.), and then reacting in petulant defiance to criticism. Hence, as one recalls, the systematic confiscation at Havana airport of any and every book touching on the Cuban revolution. Only helpful criticism is permitted; but since no criticism is really helpful (while the crisis lasts, you understand), no criticism is permitted. Only the stereotyped celebrations and banalities of *Granma*.

Hilary Spurling

How It Burns

Three Guineas by VIRGINIA WOOLF *Hogarth Press* £4.95

Books and Portraits by VIRGINIA WOOLF edited by Mary Lyons *Hogarth Press* £5.50

Virginia Woolf is scarcely flattering about people who read book reviews – 'shuffling and shambling through the smeared and dejected pages of those who must live by prostituting culture' – although, by her own definition, she herself prostituted culture pretty freely in the intellectual weeklies. She is no friendlier to anyone who writes books for money, or lectures on them in the universities, or for that matter listens to the lectures:

> for the sons and daughters of [educated people] after the age of 18 to continue to sip English literature through a straw is a habit that seems to deserve the terms vain and vicious; which terms can justly be applied with greater force to those who pander to them.

Admittedly both these quotations come from her feminist tract, *Three Guineas*, which seems to have been written in a peculiarly heated frame of mind. It was provoked by an encounter on the steps of the London Library with E. M. Forster, who explained that the library committee had been considering the admission of lady members – when Leslie Stephen's daughter naturally assumed that she was being asked to stand – added that, on reflection, the committee had agreed that ladies were not to be tolerated at any price. Mrs Woolf was so angry that she went straight home to write a swingeing riposte called *On Being Despised*.

Latter-day members of the women's movement will find much to comfort and amuse them in what was eventually published in 1938 as *Three Guineas*. It is packed with gems of masculine wit and wisdom – Bagehot, for instance, withholding his approval from the founder of Girton on the grounds that female intellectual development was against nature ('I assure you I am not an enemy of women. I am very favourable to their employment as *labourers*

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or in any other *menial* capacity'); or Professor Joad defending the sexual purity of the Brains Trust ('Women, I think, ought not to sit down to table with men; their presence ruins conversation . . .'). It records, among countless other social, educational, moral and material privations, the fact that the Army, Navy, Church and Stock Exchange were not yet open to women, and nor was membership of Cambridge University. Some of its remedies – equal pay for equal work, a woman's party in the House of Commons, wages to be paid to wives and daughters working at home – are still familiar enough today.

So is the streak of virulence which runs right through the book, and a tendency to muddle the argument or at any rate divert it to take in any number of extraneous targets: in this case intermittent sniping at the worlds of Grub Street and academe develops into a concerted attack on the militarist outlook, in the course of which feminism turns out to be virtually indistinguishable from pacifism. And here Mrs Woolf becomes positively cranky, since her advice to women concerned to avert war in 1938 boils down to recommending that they refuse to read (or write for) the newspapers, to give or attend lectures on English literature, and that they confine their criticism of books, music and paintings to word of mouth delivered privately to the artist in person. By these means 'you would do all in your power to break the ring, the vicious circle, the dance round and round the mulberry tree, the poison tree of intellectual harlotry' – and thereby apparently put paid to the prospect of European war. The plot thickens a few pages later when the very same people are urged to take part in another dance round a bonfire signifying, for reasons not at all easy to fathom, the death of feminism:

> Let us write that word in large black letters on a sheet of foolscap; then solemnly apply a match to the paper. Look, how it burns! What a light dances over the world! Now let us bray the ashes in a mortar with a goose-feather pen, and declare in unison singing together that anyone who uses that word in future is a ring-the-bell-and-run-away-man, a mischief maker, a groper among old bones, the proof of whose defilement is written in a smudge of dirty water upon his face.

Quite a lot of *Three Guineas* is given over to this fanciful, faux-naïf sprightliness, a kind of period prattle much in vogue at the time. Parts of it are so incoherent as to be more or less impenetrable unless perhaps from an autobiographical point of view. Other parts suggest a curious ignorance, or at least a rather startlingly superficial response to the Nazi threat which took practical shape in the months before and after publication. It is not hard to detect behind this somewhat shaky grasp of reality traces of that evasive, ethereal, at bottom even sentimental vision of human affairs so often imperfectly concealed by the bold technical innovations in Virginia Woolf's novels. But, for all its contrariness, the book's drawbacks are always intriguing.

Its charms – vivacity, a kind of placid malice, a beady eye for the telling detail or the quirky story – are also those of *Books and Portraits*. This is the eighth collection of Virginia Woolf's journalism, and a singularly impressive one considering that, on its editor's own admission, it consists largely of earlier editors' leavings. Dr Lyon has dug out an enthusiastic account of Wagner at Bayreuth in 1909, and several shrewd reviews of Dostoevsky and Turgenev as they came hot from Mrs Garnett's hands in the first decades of the century; and one can't but be grateful for characteristic felicities on practically every topic from mid-Victorian novelists to Thoreau's father's secret recipe for lead pencils.

But, able and entertaining as nearly all these essays are, they are too short to do more than skim the surface of each subject and too elegantly expert in tone to provide fresh personal or even professional insight on their author. The book is not, of course, in anything like the same low category as a certain life of Mrs Eliza Haywood, the eighteenth century Ouida, published by a luckless scion of Columbia university in 1916; still, it strikes one as a trifle rash on any editor's part to include Mrs Woolf's review of that supernumerary volume together with her scathing indictment of academic barrel-scraping:

> It does not matter, presumably, that [Mrs Haywood] was a writer of no importance, that no one reads her for pleasure, and that nothing is known of her life. She is dead, she is old, she wrote books, and nobody has yet written a book about her . . .

David Lodge

Make It New

The Lessons of Modernism by GABRIEL JOSIPOVICI *Macmillan* £8.95

Gabriel Josipovici's *The World and the Book* (1971) was certainly one of the best books of criticism to have made its first appearance in England (rather than in America or France) in recent years. Its polemical bias against realism resulted in some serious distortions of literary history, but it was notable for its passion, eloquence and scope, ranging confidently over European literature from Dante to Robbe-Grillet, and scattering many brilliant *aperçus* on the way. Its thesis, roughly speaking, was that modern fiction is always, to a greater or less extent, metafiction, fiction *about* fiction: it draws attention to its own processes, either by disrupting conventional form, or explicitly commenting on the relation of form to content. In this way it makes the reader conscious of the processes of reading, of the nature of human perception and indeed of the 'laws of existence', thus approximating to the moral and metaphysical illuminations afforded by the great monuments of Christian culture, such as *The Divine Comedy*.

In the occasional essays collected under the title *The Lessons of Modernism*, Mr Josipovici has not added any substantially new ideas to those so richly provided in *The World and the Book*, and to that extent the more recent work is something of a disappointment. But there are some new appli-

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Michael Ratcliffe, The Times £7.95

Hamish Hamilton

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cations of the ideas – to the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessao, to Walter Benjamin, to Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Britten, Maxwell Davies, Stockhausen – and some interesting adjustments of emphasis. Mr Josipovici's own concern with the practice of writing – he is, with Christine Brooke-Rose, a rare exponent of the *nouveau roman* in English – is more perceptible than before in his essays on writers (especially Kafka) who were obsessed by the imperative to write, and yet haunted by the gratuitousness of the activity, and the divorce it seems to entail from 'real life'. Josipovici, however, refuses to grant the artist a special, privileged status in the early modernist fashion:

> He is only special in so far as he grasps more clearly than most the real nature of the human condition, which is that of existing in a world where we can nowhere find authority for our actions, our beliefs, even our perceptions.

Mr Josipovici views the human condition through the double lens of structuralism and a nostalgic post-Christian stoicism. Man is a mixture of culture and nature: a 'self' that is painfully constructed out of language and a biological body that is doomed to die. Post-Renaissance Europe, of which the realistic novel was the typical literary product, is characterised by Josipovici as 'a long nightmare . . . a mixture of lunatic pride and unbelievable naïveté', because it tried to pretend that the concept of the self was given by Nature, and to suppress the fact of death by such devices as the myth of progress and the creation of literary fictions that were lifelike, easily comprehended, uninterrupted, unselfconscious and reassuring. The value of modern art is that it restores the true picture, though without the promise of redemption and immortality that Christianity provided it is a somewhat bleak one.

Josipovici's critical stance has an undeniable appeal: he offers a justification of modern art that is not purely aesthetic or formalistic but is not crudely ideological either, dissociating himself with equal firmness from Leavisian and Marxist dogmatising, and from cultural doomwatching of the kind practised by George Steiner. He is also capable of beautifully phrased, brilliantly illuminating observations on particular texts. But I still feel, as I felt about *The World and the Book*, that his basic dichotomy between realistic post-Renaissance art and modern art is too simple and too exclusive. Criticism needs to discriminate between different kinds and phases of modernism (Josipovici implies that Robbe-Grillet's affinity with Eliot is as close as Proust's). More importantly, criticism should surely account for the continuing vitality of realistic modes of artistic presentation, and refine its methods of 'reading' them, rather than just wishing them away. It is symptomatic that Josipovici has in this volume a whole section of essays on modern music drama of the highbrow variety; but not one reference that I could remember to film, an artistic medium unique to the modern era, and one in which the possibilities of realism are still being explored to stunning effect.

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We

Great Granny Webster by CAROLINE BLACKWOOD *Duckworth* £3.95
The Savage Crows by ROBERT DREWE *Collins* £4.50
Speedboat by RENATA ADLER *Hamish Hamilton* £3.95

Great Granny Webster is a slim book, read in a trice: but it stays in the mind as solid and structured as the uncompromising Victorian chair on the cover. In this chair Great Granny herself would sit, upright, uncomfortable and unmoving for hours at a time in her mausoleum of a house, her day broken only by very small, unpleasant meals served by an aged maidservant on silver dishes, and by an hour's slow driving up and down the foggy seafront in a chauffeured Rolls.

Two months of Great Granny Webster's company, when sent for the wholesome sea air at 14, has led the unnamed narrator to try to find out more about her family and their scarcely imaginable connection with Great Granny: and so we come to know about grandmother Dunmartin, and *her* daughter Aunt Lavinia, and son Ivor who is father to the narrator and died in the second world war. Each link in the family chain of pain and destruction is neatly and inexorably snapped into place: pretty, impish grandmother who eventually has to be put away where she can listen to her fairy voices in seclusion; *gamine* Lavinia, life and soul of every party, who finds it too maddening when she is foiled in a suicide attempt – 'I had it all perfectly planned, darling. It couldn't have been more Roman'; and Ivor, failed scholar, drinker, killed at the right time.

The bloodless old lady outlives them all, Scottish granite all through, while the despair of her descendants trickles through the family tree like the blood of Lavinia's suicide. It is a story, really, about evil, respectably and unobtrusively incarnated, and it ends with the perfect stroke of grotesquerie as Great Granny Webster's abundant and sparkling ashes are finally returned to earth:

> In no way did it seem at all correct, that Great Granny Webster should look frivolously snowy and sweet, almost exactly like castor sugar that was being poured into a bowl as an ingredient for a wedding cake . . She, who had always liked to hoard and count and ration, could surely only be appalled by the lavish and devil-may-care generosity with which she was now being poured into the earth.

The Savage Crows presents wickedness in more overt, less gently conversational form. Stephen Crisp, having been 'in media' in Sydney, has left in order to write and is going to pieces in conventional fashion – slugs in the kitchen, guilt in his heart, ex-wife in the suburbs, ex-girlfriend sleeping around with 'serene bisexual organic farmers'. His own guilt has become entangled with his country's guilt towards its aboriginal owners, and he is researching a book on the extermination of the Tasmanian natives (here the author has drawn directly on historical material which will be new to most English readers).

The story (which Crisp is reading) of 'Conciliator' Robinson's mission to the natives of Van Diemen's Land in 1829 is interwoven with flashbacks from Crisp's past life and chunks of his present – ending, like *Great Granny Webster*, with a fine stroke of black comedy. The invention and vitality are unforced but the narrative joins are skilfully spliced together rather than organically connected. However (the sacred monster White apart), Australia surely needs writers like Robert Drewe who can convey to the outsider both the atmosphere of a sleazy suburban, present-day Australia and also of a savage, beautiful space/time hinterland. A sense of wholeness shattered hangs about the story of the Tasmanian mission; both Crisp and the aboriginal remnants are remotely damaged survivors.

In *Speedboat*, damage again, survivals again: fragmentation in a very different key. Very cool, very *New Yorker*, it has a bunch of distinguished fans to boost it on the jacket: Renata Adler is 'an arranger of miniatures in inevitable patterns', says John Updike; and bright adjectives flow – funny, sad, abrupt, direct, painful, racy, pitiless, honest, ingenious. It is not in any sense a novel: there is nothing as unhip as a plot, and the characters are just 'we'. We are urban internationals in New York with names like Vlad, Matt, Inge, Elio, Gregor and Didi; we often work on newspapers and have seen Klu Klux Klan klaverns, Algerian bombings, beggars in Beersheba and emergency wards in Brooklyn. We have European backgrounds somewhere but were at progressive schools where relaxation classes were compulsory; at college there were madrigals and woman teachers great on knitting and Linear B. We have motor accidents and avoid rape and when we go a little mad we can't decide whether to apologize to the egg chosen for cooking or the one left behind in the fridge.

With the funny-sad pitilessness and ingenuity and so on correctly ascribed to it, *Speedboat* does speed from surrealistic fragment to fragment to build up a kind of giggly American scream that makes all other attempts to do the same thing seem heavy-handed. It muses on the edge of whimsy without quite falling in; but even if it starts by alienating you by its supercool and its Richard Avedon photograph, it will win you over in the end with its quiet jokes and the excellence of its prose.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Ian Hamilton

Mummy Go Home

ɔrkshire Television have been boasting ɔut the uniqueness of the methods em- ɹed in the making of *The Case of Y ɹde McShane*, but there has been a pɹ ɛr nervousness built into their self- pɹ ɛ. Never before, they have proclaimed, hɨ television company made use of video- taɨ naterial collected by the police in the coɨ of a criminal investigation, and nev before has an accused person been inter ved by television during the course of hi ɾ her trial. Yorkshire boast of set- ting a ɛecedent, but they don't go so far as to ɔommend that the precedent be follow One can hardly blame them; the Yoland McShane programme was com- pelling watch, but one would wish it to remain exception to any of the rules that pre tly govern how our television is ordin ɾ made.

Durir the making of *Johnny Come Home*, rkshire Television had amicable dealings ith the Sussex Police and con- sequentl earned that the force were de- veloping eir own film industry. In the McShan ɪse, the police had been tipped off that ande was encouraging her well- off mum commit suicide; Yolande her- self was f ɪg bankruptcy and badly needed the inh nce that would come to her when m ny snuffed it. Mummy herself, holed up a nursing home, had long enter- tained st al fantasies and liked to feel that she the means to hand. Yolande was more n willing to supply the means, and put i good word now and then in favour of ultimate solution. The police moved in ɪ their video equipment (they masquera rather grandiosely as 'plum- bers') anc ned the whole of Yolande's Mothering nday visit to her mum. The film was ɹ tted as evidence at Yolande's trial, and ɨ was jailed for two years. Yorkshire ogramme was an account of the case, the meat of the account was a public sl ng of the police film, released o them – ording to Sussex's chief con- table – sɨ ɪt 'no longer will people feel t possible lo things in a private, under- ɪand man

'Don't l it too long, Mum, otherwise 'll worry ɛlf to death'; 'If you've made up your r . do it. It's cowardly not to lo it. If y ɹad a dog that was suffering, ou'd do Don't bungle it, don't make mess of 'If I left the means and you ake them, nothing to do with me'; 'If ou take t , and a big drink of whisky, 's always ɪl, Mummy'; 'If we get an- ther Labɔ Government, there won't *be* ny inheri money'. Thus the solicitous aughter, thus an open-and-shut case or the e. And thus a television udience ɨ-mouthed with the grisly leasure of ɾning to the most private of exchanges between people they will never meet. There's something badly wrong here, though, and oddly enough it's in the realm of literary judgment: we were shown per- haps half an hour's worth of a three and a half hour film, and we were asked to agree that the force of persuasive language was of criminal or potentially criminal effectiveness (in fact, the mother didn't die until last week, and then of natural causes). All that was *done*, and all the police would have known about (minus their equipment) was that a daughter slipped her mother a handful of sleeping pills; but it was not for this that the daughter was prosecuted. She was prosecuted for what she *said*: in other words, she could have handed over the pills, spoken of them differently, and got away scot-free. 'I can't bear the thought, Mummy, of you having these sleepless nights.' That's not what Yolande said, nor is it – we were here persuaded – what she meant. Now let us all cast our minds back to the last time *we* said something we'd rather the police didn't get to study word by word.

Other Voices (BBC-2) had Harold Evans, in the first of a new four-part series, study- ing the rise of the magazine *Rolling Stone*. The whizz-kid proprietor, Jann Wenner, was shown to be bursting with naïvety and energy, and we were given circulation figures to prove that these qualities had paid off in the market place; but at the end of it all I think most people will have remained puzzled about exactly how this – naïve, yes, energetic, so it seems – but none the less muddled, vain and inarticulate young rock freak has managed to run anything, let alone anything at all successful. We listened to him ramble narcissistically, we watched him preside over a pitifully chaotic editorial meeting, we heard him praised to the heavens by Tom Wolfe. Evidence of some- thing, to be sure, but Evans's poker-faced approach could surely have ventured just a bit further into sceptical analysis.

Not, one should say, that he was to be found in anything like the kneeling position adopted by Fyfe Robertson in *Robbie* (BBC-1). Wearing a furry mantle of what looked like failure, Robertson spent his slot marvelling at the money-amassing gifts of Laura Ashley and of some other fellow (whose name I didn't catch) who goes in for selling kites. Step by step, the grizzled Celt led the winners through each stage of their rocket-like careers, wheezing with admiration at each coup and obviously pre- pared to give his left camera for a quarter of their loot. The Ashley item was climaxed as the family's private turbo-jet took off in search of foreign contracts: 'Up noo and awa',' burred FR, 'time-saving and inde- pendent, private enterprise in action.' Well, at least, Robbie, there are lots of r's in 'private enterprise'.

Why was Jimmy Hill looking so repug- nantly gleeful at the beginning of last Saturday's 500th edition of *Match of the Day* (BBC-1)? We all knew from our green 'uns that the two birthday matches had produced but a single goal between them, and that the next day's *Big Match* (ITV) had no fewer than 13 to offer. Why therefore the more than usually macabre grin, the jaunty air of having something menacingly semi-millenial in store? Bemused, we lazily concluded that the show's new opening credits (which featured several hundred children holding aloft a jigsaw facsimile of Jimmy Hill) would be shown again at sign- off time and that Hill was simply longing for another, fuller look.

Not so, however, and reprehensibly un- fair to Hill. The bearded one's commemor- ative gift turned out to be more desolatingly apt than anything we'd dared to dream of – there beside him in the studio was none other than a still living Kenneth Wolsten- holme, winner of the 1966 World Cup and original presenter of *MOTD*. Most of you will remember the mysterious ousting of the widely jeered-at commentator, and most of you will also have wondered in the years since his demise why his brand of effortless banality needed to be replaced by the effort- ful pseudo-scientism of the likes of Jimmy Hill. Poor Kenneth cut a dated, off-the-peg figure beside the peacock Hill, and sighed throughout for the days when goals were goals. Hill listened compassionately, and contented himself with the odd sneer at Wolstenholme's unfortunate hair-do; why not let the buffer ramble on, he's through – this was the general stance, and poor Wolstenholme couldn't help himself rising lumpishly to the bait. Hill got more and more smugly sheikish as the frayed anglo- mane puffed and blustered on about the antique footage: 'They tell me a Czecho- slovak once did that too, but then a Czecho- slovak would; they do that sort of thing in Czechoslovakia.' Oh, dear.

Opera

Eric Sams

And the Book

The Ring of the Nibelungen *London Coliseum; further performance 21, 23, 29 September and 1 October*

Not all our visitors to London have yet learned that the English Ring enshrines some of our most cherished rites. From where I sat, it sounded as if Wagner had inadvertently scored the Rhinegold prelude for two brassy voices with cellophane ob- bligato accompanied by a sharp attack of pleurisy. But that was only Row J's orches- tral thesaurus. Soon the real Rhine reas- serted itself, rising and rolling through the theatre, buoying up the singers, sustaining

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the stage illusion, sweeping the audience off and to its feet, and finally bringing the house down.

Any account of the Wagnerian creation must begin with the word, always the prime mover of his music. Bright are the words of the Ring, no doubt, when the right man rings them; and Andrew Porter's singing version, now published with parallel German text and introduction (Faber £4.80), certainly has appeal. But he sensibly sounds a warning note about the 'enormous and inevitable losses' of any translation (his paperback is also available clothbound for £15, or £50 in a limited edition). The substitution of new lamps for old, however deft and illuminating, entails a diminution of weight, substance and magic power. The tarnished gold and rusty iron of Wagner's deliberately old-fashioned and overwrought German sometimes seem rather chromium-plated in this version; for example 'glittering' does duty for some dozen different German words, not all of which mean anything of the kind. At least the text thus simplified always had a pronounced clarity; but that was less true of the sung diction. Too many of the cast had their innate ability marred by inaudibility; and even some of the stronger voices were far more notable for their resonance than their consonants. Admittedly the threshold of comprehension varied widely with orchestral dynamics and scoring, and vocal register and timbre, as well as with the competence, experience and sheer determination of the individual performers. But it seemed absurd that any part of a modern translation especially designed for the English National Opera should for any reason be lost on an English-speaking audience.

Such defects, though only intermittent, were doubly disappointing; for whenever the voices could be distinctly made out, they gave us an electrifying Ring, with direct and instantaneous communication and response. Production (Glen Byam Shaw, John Blatchley), design (Ralph Koltai) and lighting (Robert Ornbo, Roger Frith) combined to enhance the vividness of impact. Thus the Gibichung roof-beams collapsed athwart the funeral pyre of Siegfried (the redoubtable Alberto Remedios) with stunning effect; it was perhaps his most heroic moment. Even the Wagnerian hyperbole of using the overflowing Rhine as a pyre extinguisher was rendered visually compelling. Each singer contributed some further quota of immediacy by their ability to sing, act, sound or look the part. But too few of them, I thought, were consistently competent at all four. Among the more notable exceptions were Emile Belcourt as Loge, Paul Crook as Mime, Katharine Pring as Fricka and Waltraute, and Derek Hammond Stroud as Alberich. Rita Hunter sang Brünnhilde with full-throated and moving ardour.

But the outstanding performance, by the general consensus of a standing ovation, came from the orchestra under the direction of Reginald Goodall. He was so manifestly immersed and carried away in the great stream of sound that one is tempted to hail Wagner as the best of all current Goodall-conductors. It should also be said that quite apart from drowning rather more of the cast than the script actually requires, the orchestral playing, like the translation, could suffuse the music with fresh meaning; as (to cite just one instance) in the motif of Loge, god of liars and fires, all flickering tongue and flame. In sum then, the performance just needed, and should by now have received, a further final polishing of diction and direction. When we can all be entirely sure of catching the least word, and the last train, this will be a well-rounded and shining Ring.

Theatre

Peter Conrad

Go On Talking

Don Giovanni *Lyttelton*
Man and Superman *Savoy*

Don Juan is an anthological character, unfurling new aspects of himself as he recurs in each artistic period. A scurrilous atheist in Tirso da Molina, in Molière he becomes a satirist, employing sexual attraction to prise open the gap between moral pretence and carnal actuality. Mozart turns him into an 18th century hero of sensibility and refinement of appetite, whose very nose is so prodigiously responsive it can scent a woman before she appears; but this libertine, devoted to the 18th century's pursuit of happiness, finds himself as the opera progresses in a 19th century drama of damnation. The Commendatore demands that he develop a soul and learn repentance, but the hedonistic Giovanni prefers to die. After Mozart, the character is successively diminished. Byron's Juan is a social adventurer not a rampaging natural force; Auden makes him a hero of the gossip columns, snapped in fashionable locations escorting nubile show girls. The alternative to trivilisation is sterilisation: the libertine is converted from absorption in his own delight to service of humanity. Shaw in *Man and Superman* makes his Juan a socialist, and Leporello's catalogue of conquests becomes a revolutionary tract; Max Frisch says that a modern Juan would prefer the profession of nuclear scientist.

Mozart's and Shaw's versions of the myth have been on view this week. Glyndebourne's *Don Giovanni* has transferred to the National Theatre, and the RSC *Man and Superman* comes to London from the Malvern Festival. Peter Hall's *Don Giovanni* is mistakenly Shavian before its time, suppressing the elation and sensuous abandon of the work by setting it under lachrymose or overcast skies, and boxing its action inside a drab all-purpose courtyard which opens out, for Giovanni's revels, into a miserable barn. After the opening bars make their announcement of death, Giovanni is granted a reprieve: comedy keeps tragedy at bay, and Giovanni even at the end makes a joke of his retribution. This Hall's louring, sombre production won't allow. The bad weather is a logical error. If Giovanni is the lightning, as Kierkegaard and Shaw proclaimed, a spark of demonic energy, why does he quail at the thunderclaps he himself has generated? The umbrellas the characters deploy are also inappropriate. Leporello takes care to keep his master, a fearless force of nature, out of the rain; Elvira, swearing to tear out her tormenter's heart, sedately remembers to keep her brolly aloft. The work has been domesticated, reduced to gentility: the Commendatore pads out to challenge the invaders in carpet slippers. It seemed no accident that, at the Lyttelton, the orchestra had been banished under the stage, its sound dampened and distanced, for the production slights the musical exuberance which, as Kierkegaard said, is central to the character of Mozart's Giovanni.

Man and Superman also lacks music. Shaw's Juan, the radical Tanner, talks instead of singing, and propagandises instead of seducing. 'Go on talking,' Ann says to him with fond derision as the curtain falls. Loquacity is the libertine's downfall: Kierkegaard criticises Byron for voyeuristically gossiping about sex and not letting his Juan get on with it, and Tanner, nagging and prosily discursive, is for this reason hardly a Juan at all. The association begins as a nickname, and although the third act (absent in the present production) transforms the characters into the prototypes from *Don Giovanni,* the comedy and the philosophy remain detachable. Shaw admitted as much in countenancing the omission of the debate in hell, and the fissures between the comedy of courtship and the drama of evolution, between intrigue and dialectic, show in the jokes. When Tanner rounds on Malone, he cries, 'You the missing husband! Another moral impostor! The first exclamation belongs to farce the second to allegory, and Shaw relies on laughter to bracket them together.

Clifford Williams's production find shame-faced self-parody where none is intended. Tanner's fantasy about clasping Ann on the edge of a precipice and jumping with her is played for a hearty laugh, though it marks a significant transition in the play The Mozartean connoisseur of sense her becomes a demented Wagnerian lover, fo whom sexual surrender is a suicide pact Don Giovanni has turned into his thanatological opposite, Tristan. Self-protectiv parody can't conceal the fact that, in Shaw preface, stage directions and undramati expanses of argument like the absent Ac Three matter more than the substance o the play, which is too slight to support th ideas Shaw loads on it. *Man and Superman,* as he conceded, is 'not a play, bu a volume which contains a play.'

These weaknesses are underlined by th performance. Though the protagonists of biological comedy, Richard Pasco ar Susan Hampshire as Tanner and Ann a as mannered and effete as Wildean herm phrodites. He struts, she flounces; his voi full tide could on occasion be a bore. Th Annunciation of Death scene for examp was surely far too funereal, while Siegfriec forging song lacked fire to the point sounding like much ado about Nothun Still, these were the infrequent defects consistently fine qualities, namely intensi and integrity at the highest level. As a resu

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is tir nd stringy, hers constricted. Ann
is Sh evolutionary version of Mozart's
vindi Anna, who has now learned from
the h ıes of Wagner and Ibsen how to
subdı ıd engorge the male: characterist-
ically ıw has no place for Elvira, whose
sexua pulses are generous not punitive.
Miss ıpshire is too demure for the part,
and : rom suggesting the imperious Life
Forc e minces and postures as if engag-
ed tc del costumes. The smaller roles are
woef undercast: Violet is played as a
teena ady Bracknell, Miss Ramsden as
a pa ıime dame, and Octavius is only
too ibly insipid. Some honour is saved
by] y Henson as the chauffeur Henry
Stra who doesn't share the RSC affecta-
tion: voice and movement, and copes
ener ally with a green car which is
the y object of visual interest in the
min production. His role indicates the
diff e between Mozart and *Man and*
Sup m: Shaw has neutered Don Gio-
van nd redeemed Leporello by putting
him ough an engineering course at a
poly nic. Mozart's demons have been
mec sed.

Art

John Spurling

Amateurs

Ch e Paintings of the Ch'ing Dynasty
l-1912 *British Museum*

Tl nderlying argument between artists
ar ritics in the Hayward affair, which I
w about in my last, is over whether you
d ur thing and let people take it or leave
it make a deliberate effort to involve 'the
p e'. Some suggestion of what this might
er was contained in Guy Brett's intro-
d n to the exhibition of contemporary
C se peasant paintings last year:

> whole idea of the isolated genius, the
> it whose effect on others . . . is often
> nnical because he intimidates them from
> mselves producing, received a great blow
> cause the more worker and peasant artists
> ıo have emerged the greater the encourage-
> ent to others. The accent now is on being
> producer as well as a consumer of art.

e show itself, however, was a poor ad-
tisement for its cause: painting by num-
ers in more senses than one.

To compare it as art with the current ex-
ibition at the British Museum would be
udicrous; yet that too is 'amateur' art. The Chinese, after their precocious fashion, had run through a complete cycle of art history by the end of the 13th century. Thereafter the professionals received less and less serious consideration and the significant artists – beginning with those of Khubla Khan's Yüan dynasty – were all scholar-amateurs. In the second half of the 17th century the amateurs themselves split into two parties; the Orthodox school who made their peace with the new Ch'ing dynasty and followed the precepts of the great scholar-artist Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (died 1636); and the Individualists, who regretted the fallen Ming dynasty and took themselves off to monasteries or private retreats, there to evolve their own personal styles, based on a fresh observation of nature as well as on that intellectual study of the ancients which was common to all scholar-artists since the time of Khubla Khan.

By the eighteenth century Individualism had become the in-thing and Orthodoxy was fighting a losing and angry battle against 'the corrupt practices' of the so-called Eccentrics, one of whom abandoned the brush altogether in favour of an extra-long fingernail, split to act as a pen. High time for the peasants, it might seem, except that the 'isolated genius' of those deviant Individualists and even of some of the running dogs of Orthodoxy is either the whole point of art or my name is Guy Brett.

In spite of the intense study of ancient methods which went into these paintings, and leaving aside the element of connoisseurship, which is more important to the Chinese than to us, the effect on the viewer is immediate, requiring no previous knowledge, hardly even any adjustment, though one has just walked off a twentieth-century London street. The landscape is not ours, the people are not us, the period and society are as foreign as could be; you could live a lifetime without seeing or missing these paintings, but once seen they are familiar and inevitable as your own face.

The fact that they are recognisable landscapes – though exaggeratedly mountainous and studded here and there with Buddhist temples and other Oriental buildings – may account for part of the familiarity, at least when studying the small album leaves, such as those by the Individualist master Tao-chi, which are single 'views' and can be seen as a whole. But the scrolls, whether hanging from the wall or designed to be unrolled section by section, can't be looked at as we look at Western landscape paintings. They have to be followed in time, like a piece of music or a walk. In Hsiao Yün-ts'ung's handscroll *Trees in Frost* we start with an area of small trees growing on broken rocky ground which gives way to a flat, open rock where a man is sitting. (This standard, contemplative figure, like the prologue to a play, often supplies the point of entry or bridge from the viewer's world and scale to that of the painting.) Below the man's vantage-point, the ground plunges out of sight and we are among the tops of tall trees growing out of a ravine. Next, a temple with pink walls and a grey-blue roof, half hidden by trees and another rock-face. Now the nearer trees seem to have come closer and at once fall away again below us to reveal a slow rising slope carpeted with a thin wash of pale, icy green. Beside the slope, among more trees, is a house (whose occupant is visible inside), surrounded by a wall with an open gate, on the other side of a small bridge over a waterfall. The rocks above the waterfall gather themselves into an overhanging cliff which we seem to drop off, to find ourselves suddenly in the company of two women and a crane on a bare upland pasture.

The hanging scrolls – grander developments of the handscrolls – lead the viewer from bottom to top; an ascent, for example in the Orthodox master Wang Yüan-chi's *Landscape in the style of Huang Kung-wang*, of a monumental river valley set about with mountains, which one climbs in a movement from mass to mass across the picture, at the same time as apparently inwards into the illusory space created by the contours of the peak beyond the river.

These are addictive paintings. They are not so much landscapes as essences or abstractions of landscape, which is to say of human beings' psychological relationship with landscape, wild or tamed, spacious or confining, overpowering or intimate. The paintings insist on their brushstrokes, on their style (and often enough on the style of their predecessors), since that is what mediates between artist and viewer, magically transforming a place or the idea of a place into a shared experience.

K'un-ts'an, whose two nervously complicated album leaves of *Autumn* and *Winter* are the finest things in the exhibition, was one of the Individualists who entered a monastery. He once did a picture of a monk in a tree and inscribed it:

> The question is how to find peace in a world of suffering. You ask how I came hither; I cannot tell the reason. I am living high up in a tree and looking down. Here I can rest free from all trouble, like a bird in its nest. People call me a dangerous man, but I answer 'You are like devils'.

Set that down for the isolated genius's surly reply to Guy Brett's extension of the politics of envy, but look at K'un-ts'an's landscapes, which are seen almost as if from a tree, and both sides of that particular argument seem equally irrelevant. You too, for as long as you care to look, can be the dangerous man in the tree and practise in your mind the master's prickly skill.

There is unfortunately no catalogue for the exhibition, but Macmillan have just republished (at £9) James Cahill's excellent *Chinese Painting*.

Films

David Wilson

Ape Call

Head (A) *The Other Cinema*
Marjoe (AA) and **The Moon over the Alley** (A\A) *Covent Garden Cinema*
The Return of the Tall Blond (AA) *EMI International, Bloomsbury*

A week of revivals and revivalists. Small screen addicts of long memory may just recall an unprepossessing foursome called The Monkees, a plastic-moulded Anglo-American pop group who trailed in the wake and what they thought was the manner of the Beatles in the sunset of flower power. *Head* is their apotheosis, a celebration of sorts concocted nine years ago by Bob Rafelson before he went on to better things, like *Five Easy Pieces*. The Monkees were media-manufactured and knew it ('The

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money's in, We're made of tin'). They bloomed briefly among the less discriminating teeny-boppers until they were overtaken by the hard rock sounds of another age. This celluloid charade comes on like a rainbow-coloured Kleenex, instantly disposable, and justifies its belated appearance here only as a forgotten artefact of pop culture. The quartet are involved in a series of misadventures and camera tricks, vaguely mocking movie conventions and their own collapsible image. Frantically unfunny pastiches of war films and golden-boy boxing sagas alternate with jokey juxtapositions, like the one which shuffles screaming fans with newsreel shots of Vietnam refugees. (That icon of the tired TV producer – the Vietcong prisoner shot through the head in a Saigon street – also appears.) The offence is cumulative, and coloured lurid; and only a few moments, as when the four emerge as dandruff in Victor Mature's hair, survive the general embarrassment. The style was mercifully buried within a year of its birth. But the movie lingers on, evidently – and astonishingly – a cult on campus.

Scarcely less synthetic, but rather more durable, is *Marjoe*, a film made in 1972 which now re-emerges as half of a curiosity double bill. Marjoe Gortner was a marquee preacher, a slick salvationist who toured Middle America conning his mesmerised flocks out of hard-won dollar bills. In this documentary he bares and burns his soul, confessing to camera that his hell-fire blatherings leave him cold. An artful dodger, he blends an Elmer Gantry delivery with a Mick Jagger knee-jerk ('The guys who have the gimmicks get the meetings'), and the fans fall quivering to the floor and reach for their pocket-books. Exploited as well as exploiting – he was launched on the revivalist circuit as a mop-haired four-year-old – he is caught counting the spoils on a motel bed and eagerly admitting his shyster's tricks of the trade. Now, he says, he wants out. And it came to pass, in the shape of a new career as a movie actor, riding another wave of mass hysteria as a supporting player in *Earthquake*.

In the same programme is *The Moon over the Alley*, briefly released earlier this year and worth revisiting. This curious hybrid, uncomfortably but ingeniously mixing drama and songs, is set in the terraced hinterland of Notting Hill, the cosmopolitan quarter where the Portobello Road meets the property developers. As a local, I can confirm the accuracy of its view of a disintegrating community, in this case the flotsam and jetsam washed into the temporary harbour of a multi-national lodging house ripe for redevelopment. The film, directed by Joseph Despins, interlocks the stories of these people, its blend of sentiment and hard-edged realism precariously balanced by the intermittent presence of a vagabond street-singer who muses ominously about blood on the moon. The songs (by Galt MacDermott and William Dumaresq) are used as punctuation, and don't always match the rhythm of the narrative. More disconcerting is the spiral of violence towards the end, which tips over into moody melodrama. But for all its rough edges, this is an original and deserves a better reception than it got first time out.

The week's only new film confirms that the French cinema also thrives on pap. *The Return of the Tall Blond* is a dire concoction of spies and mistaken identity, itself mistaking gloss for style and telegraphed gags for visual wit. A violinist with a shambling Tati gait is the reluctant hero, and a gallery of French character actors pass mugging through.

John Coleman is on holiday.

Music

Andrew Clements

Layered

The Proms *Albert Hall*

Somebody at Broadcasting House obviously likes John Buller's music. The majority of the performances he's received in the last few years have been prompted by the BBC and the latest encouragement has been a commission for this year's proms. Buller is now 50, a 'late developer' who about ten years ago gave up a career in surveying to compose. The new work, *Proença*, is his first piece for full orchestra. It's a substantial achievement that gains extra fascination from its literary background. What *Proença* is about, Buller says, is 'song – verbal, instrumental and vocal; the joy it can represent, and the violence it can meet'. But the work is also concerned with a historical event: the rise and destruction of the Languedoc culture of the 11th and 12th centuries. This society, whose troubadours created the first European vernacular poetry, was annihilated by medieval politics when the Church and the Northern Franks combined against Provence in the Albigensian Crusade.

Buller presents this history in a roughly chronological series of settings of the Provençal lyrics for mezzo-soprano. They are divided into 11 sections (called 'layers'). As the work progresses, the external pressures on the troubadours become obvious in their disillusioned songs. The earliest are naïvely happy, concerned with celebration: 'I'll sing, for I see I must write the new song.' But by the fifth layer there is already a fatalism: 'I am Arnaud who gathers the wind . . . and swims against the tide.' The final layer with texts by Guiraud Riquier shows the poet like a medieval Zhivago, struggling to fit his art into a society already in tatters.

The choice of lyrics allows Buller a much greater variety of mood than the depressing course of the work might suggest. There are sections which deal with sexual love, with the feudal love of war, with nature and with the church. What is remarkable is that for the most part the music matches the richness of the texts. It ranges from mere accompaniment, as when the singer intones the text of the fourth layer over a static orchestral background, through simply illustrative passages to more profound commentaries on the work's context – sombre violent climaxes built from overlapped blocks of sound. The orchestra is always used with precise and economic effect.

In three of the layers, settings of Arnaud Daniél – the greatest of the troubadours who was much admired by Dante – an electric guitar dominates the texture. Its use was suggested by another parallel. Buller sees in the fate of the troubadours a reflection of the events in Chicago during the 1968 Democratic Convention when the Yippies in Lincoln Park were ruthlessly suppressed by the police. In his book on that year's conventions (*Miami and the Siege of Chicago*) Norman Mailer describes the electric guitar and its music as 'some variety of true song'. Buller makes no attempt to integrate his guitar with the orchestra. It rock-inflected material stands apart, either accompanying the soprano alone or set against the orchestral percussion and brass. I'm not sure the metaphor is successful, but such is the conviction of the rest of *Proença* that I'm prepared to suspend judgment. Above all it's the open-mindedness of Buller's writing that's so impressive. He is confident enough to set passages with elements of controlled chance against strictly closed forms such as canon, and to combine moments of diatonic simplicity with highly chromatic, sometimes atonal music.

It's good to see the Proms unashamedly sugaring the pill of new music. Harrison Birtwistle's *Melencolia I* got its first London performance in a Saturday night programme coupled with the statutory performance of the *Enigma Variations*. Essentially *Melencolia I* is a clarinet concerto. The solo instrument is accompanied by a string orchestra divided into two antiphonal groups while a harp acts as an intermediary controlling the discourse. Inspired by Dürer woodcut (and by the last chapter of Günter Grass's *From the Diary of a Snail*) it travels the bleak landscape first explored in Birtwistle's masterpiece *The Triumph of Time*. From the opening sustained clarinet note the process of gradual accretion and movement is terrifying thorough. It's a concerto lacking any element of display. When Birtwistle's art is as potent as this there are few living composers to touch him.

Only two operas at the Albert Hall this year, neither of them from a London company: Peter Hall's new Glyndebourne *Don Giovanni* and the Welsh National Opera's splendid, much-travelled production of *Midsummer Marriage*. The latter continues to be the miracle of faith that that problematic work needs for a staging. Some of the principals had changed since I saw it last year in Birmingham; especially noteworthy was Felicity Lott's less glacial, more flexible Jenifer. The strength of the casting is in Mary Davies's captivating Bella and John Treleaven's heroic Mark. But the real heroes are the orchestra conducted by David Atherton and Armstrong in an extremely [illegible] *The Midsummer Marriage* may not be Tippett's masterpiece (although it's his most digestible opera), but it is the most characteristic, combining the elements of Elizabethan verse drama, neo-classicism and lyricism that vie for supremacy in all his finest works.

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Weekend Competition

No 2478 Set by John Stanley

Go tell our master,
All you passers-by,
That here, obedient to his laws,
We lie.

So runs the famous epitaph on journalists. Could we have others, please, for other professions; by 9 September.

Result of No 2475 Set by Gerry Hamill

We asked you to anatomise towns along the lines of Bossidy's 'And this is good old Boston . . .'

Report by Len the Unlucky

This was one of those occasional comps where most of the regulars fell *derrière* over tip, with lots of aimless insults about Wigan being full of clog-dancers and London full of poofters. Bossidy, we assume, was a Bostonian; since those of you who produced the right edge of malice, the authentic sense of grievance of the disappointed local social climber, were those who were writing about their old home towns. We are sending off-prints to your local newspapers, just to make sure that you *have* to move now. £4 each.

And this is Prinny's Brighton
Where Londoners come for a lark;
And ice-cream men put the bite on,
And the beach is as foul as Hyde Park.
Here's the home of Prinny's Pavilion
And a West Pier the town can't afford,
And the tits of the tarts are vermilion
In postcards as blue as a lord.
T. GRIFFITHS

And this was good old Bognor
Where a king once laid his head.
But when they asked him to come again
'Bugger Bognor' was all he said.
And this is poor old Bognor,
Home of the philistine blind
Which the Council has loyally buggered
And the people don't seem to mind.
W. A. GORDON

In Dublin's fair city
For which we give thanks
The banks are like brothels
And the brothels like banks.
IAN ALLAN

Stately, clean and neat,
Welwyn Garden City,
Apart from Shredded Wheat,
Is a non-entity. V. ERNEST COX

This is the city of Belfast,
The home of the Mick and the Prod,
Where they bomb, knife and shoot one another
In the name of the same loving God.
ROBERT BAIRD

Here's to healthy Herne Bay
Which, history has taught,
For countless geriatrics
Has proved the last resort.
'SMASHER' RANSOME

They don't allow dodgems at Frinton
Like they do at Walton on Naze
Or Durex, or beach-balls, or Bingo;
I just don't know how folk fill their days.
JIM ANTHONY

Tony Miles

Chess

No 48 The British Championship

The 1977 British Championship, held earlier this month in Brighton, was won by George Botterill. This is the second time he has won the title, the other being in 1974 after a 7-way play-off. He scored 8½/11 ahead of S. Taulbut 8, A. H. Williams 7½ and R. Bellin, R. Thomas, O. M. Hindle and C. Cubitt 7. Taulbut's performance was remarkable. He is 18 and has a BCF grade of only 189! Like Botterill and Williams he was undefeated and shared the lead right up to the last round.

This year, for the first time, the championship was sponsored by Collingwoods, the Queen's jewellers, thus more than tripling the first prize to over £700. However, even this proved insufficient to persuade the leading English players to take part. Without Keene, Hartston, Stean, Nunn, Mestel (the holder) or myself and others the tournament was as weak as ever. Of the titled participants Webb (probably the pre-tournament favourite after his recent GM result at Hamburg) and Pritchett were off-form and Penrose found a dubious way of getting back into the headlines by losing to Nigel Short.

It seems that the organisers decided to make up in quantity what the event lacked in quality by enlarging it to a record 40 players. In any case the entry was quite interesting and varied, and contained a high number of juniors. Watching the competition I had the nasty feeling that I had suddenly become a member of the older generation.

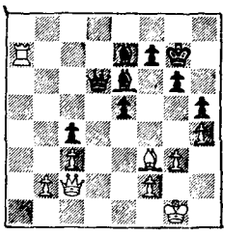
One of the winner's games:

White: C. Pritchett Black: G. Botterill

1. P-K4, P-K3; 2. P-Q4, P-Q4; 3. N-QB3, B-N5; 4. P-K5, P-QB4; 5. P-QR3, B x Nch; 6. P x B, N-K2; 7. N-B3, P-QN3; 8. P-QR4, Q-B2; 9. B-N5ch, B-Q2; 10. B-Q3, QN-B3; 11. 0-0, P-KR3; 12. B-R3, N-R4; 13. N-Q2, 0-0; 14. P x P, P x P; 15. N-N3, N x N; 16. P x N, P-B3; 17. P x P, R x P; 18. P-QB4? White has the two bishops and has undoubled his pawns, but his Q-side is weak and black stands well in the centre. Here 18. P-QN4 is positionally a more desirable break. **18 . . . P-Q5; 19. P-QN4, P x P; 20. B x P, N-B3; 21. B-R3, P-K4.** Black is already considerably better. White's pieces are undeveloped and uncoordinated and his QBP is hard to protect. **22. R-N1, N-R4; 23. B-K4, B-B3; 24. B-Q5ch, K-R1; 25. P-B4.** Desperation! **25 . . . R-Q1; 26. K-R1, B x B; 27. P x B, R x QP; 28. P x P, R x Rch; 29. Q x R, Q x P.** Now the QP is decisive. **30. R-K1, Q-B4; 31. Q-R6, R-K4; 32. R-KB1, P-Q6! 33. K-N1, Q-K5; 34. B-N2, Q-K6ch; 35. K-R1, Q-K7; 38. Q-B8ch, K-R2; 39. Q-B1, N-N6 Resigns.**

Problem 48

White, to play, is an exchange ahead and should win easily. He decides to increase his advantage by playing his Q to QB6. But should he play 1. Q-K4 or 1. Q-R4 or does it make no difference? Entries to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 7 September.

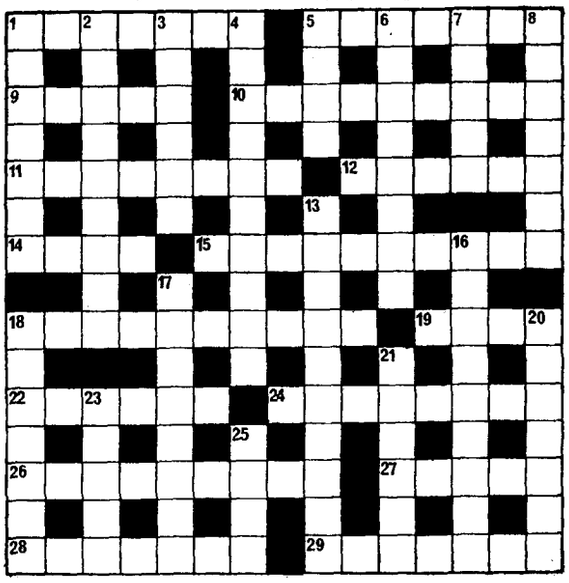


Solution to Problem 46

1. R(Q2)-Q7! Q x Q (If . . . N x R; 2. Q x Q, R x R; 3. Q-K7); 2. P x Q, N x R; 3. P-K7! K-N2; 4. R x R Resigns.

Weekend Crossword 1230

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1230, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 6 September.



ACROSS

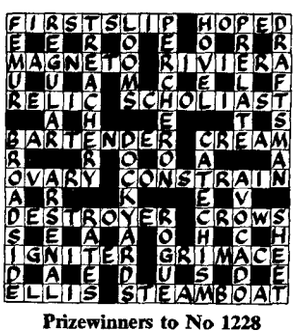
1. Watery practice but it may be of fire (7).
5. Labour place has reputation reduced by conservative (7).
9. Tricks which would give advantages without a king (5).
10. Possibly stand near somewhere in Europe (9).
11. A plant is held in a vessel like this (8).
12. 'But good men —— for want of impudence' (Dryden) (6).
14. Nymph in the chorus (4).
15. Ruses for discovering precious stones in layers (10).
18. To live behind the street in forbidding circumstances for vegetables (5, 5).
19. Food makes one grumble (4).
22. Place featured in a funny serial (6).
24. King who would look embarrassed if he lost his girl (8).
26. Put it back behind the outfit before sitting up for a bird (9).
27. Place of birth (5).
28. Eating places for hooligan in back street (7).
29. Wander about like the two of us cockneys (7).

DOWN

1. Legal annoyance at hostile demonstration? (7).
2. Something to eat, it is mashed up with a chop (9).
3. Little photographs in groups (6).
4. Biblical character about to abandon nothing for insects (10).
5. Delicate means of punishment (4).
6. Empty words in rhyme (8).
7. In bed the demand would be limited (5).
8. Balls which make Kerry so excited (7).
13. Not offbeat, as far as rivers are concerned? (10).
16. Cursed as the river in the case (9).
17. Having a constant attachment makes a man of our era phone (8).
18. Take a chance in a wager for some meat (7).
20. Dishonest musician? (7).
21. Physical discomfort which shows her in a mess (6).
23. A riot may have got out of proportion (5).
25. Beat up one's own side (4).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1228



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Vol. 94 No. 2423

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Theatres

ALDWYCH THEATRE (Royal Shakespeare Company) 836 6404. Recorded booking info: 836 5332. 'Much Ado About Nothing', 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', Ibsen's 'Pillars of The Community' in repertoire. See daily press for dates and times. RSC also at 'The Warehouse' at Donmar Theatre. Week of 29 Aug: Bond's 'Bingo'. 'Macbeth' (sold out) and C. P. Taylor's 'Bandits' (not suitable for children). And at Piccadilly Theatre in 'Wild Oats' and Savoy Theatre in 'Man and Superman'.

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